DISCOURSES

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS

AND

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

PREFACE.

HAVING been prevented, for a time, by the discharge of a laborious, but highly honourable office, from performing the more immediate duties of my profession, I was yet desirous, that I might not seem to lose the clergyman in the magistrate, of still continuing to do something towards promoting the great end and purpose of life. And though the frequent returns of business gave little hopes of composing fresh discourses, it's intervals, I thought, might suffice to digest and publish some, which had been already composed.

This form of publication is generally supposed less advantageous, at present, than any other. But it may be questioned, whether the supposition does justice to the age, when we consider only the respect which has so recently been paid to the ser-

mons of the learned and elegant Dr. BLAIR. And greater reſpect cannot be paid them, than they deſerve.

The multitude of old ſermons affords no argument againſt the publication of new ones; ſince new ones will be read, when old ones are neglected; and almoſt all mankind are, in this reſpect, *Athenians*.

Beſides, there is a *taste* in moral and religious, as well as in other compoſitions, which varies in different ages, and may very lawfully and innocently be indulged. Thouſands received inſtruction and conſolation formerly from ſermons, which would not now be endured. The preachers of them ſerved their generation, and are bleſſed for evermore. But becauſe proviſion was made for the wants of the laſt century in one way, there is no reason why it ſhould not be made for the wants of this, in another. The next will behold a ſet of writers

of

of a faſhion ſuited to it, when our diſcourses ſhall, in their turn, be antiquated and forgotten among men; though, if any good be wrought by them in this their day, our hope is, with that of faithful Nehemiah, that our God will remember us concerning them!

But as the productions of every author, who adds to the number, are expected to contain ſomething new, either in matter, or manner, it will naturally be aſked, what are my pretenſions? I will beg leave to deliver my ſentiments on the ſubject in the words of the excellent and amiable FENELON, extracted from the laſt of his moſt admirable *Dialogues on the Eloquence of the Pulpit.*

"I would have a preacher explain the "whole plan of religion, and unfold every "part of it in the moſt intelligible manner, "by ſhewing the origin and eſtabliſhment, "the tradition and connection of it's prin-"ciples, it's ſacraments and inſtitutions.

"For every thing in Scripture is con-
"nected; and this connection is, perhaps,
"the moſt extraordinary and wonderful
"thing to be ſeen in the ſacred writings.

"An audience of perſons, who had heard
"the chief points of the Moſaic hiſtory
"and law well explained, would be able
"to receive far more benefit from an ex-
"plication of the truths of the Goſpel, than
"the generality of Chriſtians are now.

"Preachers ſpeak every day to the peo-
"ple, of the Scriptures, the Church, the
"Patriarchs, the Law, the Goſpel; of
"Sacrifice, of Moſes, and Aaron, and
"Melchiſedek; of Chriſt, the Prophets,
"and Apoſtles: but there is not ſufficient
"care taken to inſtruct men in the mean-
"ing of theſe things, and the characters
"of theſe holy perſons.

"This way of having recourſe to the
"firſt foundations of religion, would be ſo
"far

" far from ſeeming low, that it would give
" moſt diſcourſes that force and beauty
" which they generally want; ſince the
" hearers can never be inſtructed or per-
" ſuaded in the myſteries of religion, if you
" do not trace things back to their ſource.

" For example — How can you make
" them underſtand what the church ſays,
" after St. Paul, that Jeſus Chriſt is our
" PASSOVER, if you do not explain to
" them the Jewiſh Paſſover, which was
" appointed to be a perpetual memorial
" of their deliverance from Egypt, and to
" typify a more important redemption,
" that was reſerved for Meſſiah?

" Almoſt every thing in religion is hiſ-
" torical. The beſt way of proving it's
" truth, is to repreſent it juſtly; for then
" it carries it's own evidence along with
" it. A coherent view of the chief facts
" relative to any perſon, or tranſaction.

" ſhould be given in a conciſe, lively,
" cloſe, pathetic manner, accompanied
" with ſuch moral reflections as ariſe
" from the ſeveral circumſtances, and
" may beſt inſtruct the hearers.

" A preacher ought to affect people by
" ſtrong images; but it is from the Scrip-
" ture that he ſhould learn to make power-
" ful impreſſions. There he may clearly
" diſcover the way to render ſermons plain
" and popular, without loſing the force
" and dignity they ought always to poſſeſs.

" If the clergy applied themſelves to
" this mode of teaching, we ſhould then
" have two different ſorts of preachers.
" They who are not endowed with a great
" ſhare of vivacity, would explain the
" Scripture clearly, without imitating it's
" lively and animated manner; and if they
" expounded the word of God judiciouſly,
" and ſupported their doctrine by an ex-
" emplary

"emplary life, they would be very good "preachers. They would employ what "St. Ambroſe requires, a chaſte, ſimple, "clear ſtyle, full of weight and gravity, "without affecting elegance, or deſpiſing "the ſmoothneſs and graces of language. "The other ſort, being of a poetical turn "of mind, would explain the holy book "in it's own ſtyle and figures; and by that "means become accompliſhed preachers. "The former would inſtruct their hearers "with ſolidity and perſpicuity; the latter "would add to this inſtruction the ſubli- "mity, the vehemence, and divine enthuſi- "aſm of the Scripture, which would be (if "I may ſo ſay) entire and living in them, "as much as it can be in men, who are "not miraculouſly inſpired from above."

This, Reader, is the model which I have choſen, and after which I have humbly endeavoured to work. I count not myſelf to have attained — Far, very far indeed

from it; as you will too ſoon diſcover. I have not yet been able by any means to ſatisfy myſelf; nor can I hope to ſatisfy you. I have done as well as I could; and know not that it will be in my power to do better. Nobler and more extenſive ideas riſe before me; but planning and executing are very different things. Time haſtens forward; and life, attended with it's cares, perhaps it's ſorrows, will quickly have run it's courſe. Accept ſuch as I can give, and pardon errors and imperfections. I ſtand at the door of the temple, with my torch. If you would view it's glories, enter in, and there dwell for ever.

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Preached before the University of *Oxford*, at *St. Mary's*, *June* 9, 1771.

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DISCOURSE I.

THE CREATION OF MAN.

GENESIS I. 26.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs; and let them have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

DISC. I.

CURIOSITY naturally prompts us to enquire into the records of the family, or ſociety, to which we belong. Every little incident, that befel our anceſtors, is collected with care, and remembered with pleaſure. The relation it bears to us gives it conſequence in our eyes, though, in the eyes of others, it may ſeem to have none. The mind, in it's progreſs, finds attention excited, as the velocity of a

DISC. I. falling body is increaſed; nor can it repoſe itſelf at eaſe on any account, which ſtops ſhort of the original and firſt founder of the community.

Every motive of this ſort conſpires to animate our reſearches into the origination of mankind, and the hiſtory of our common progenitor. We cannot but earneſtly and anxiouſly wiſh to be acquainted with the circumſtances relative to the father of that family, of which all nations are parts; to diſcover and ſurvey the root of that tree, whoſe branches have overſpread the earth.

Nor can ſuch inveſtigation be deemed matter of curioſity only. To form proper ideas of man, it is neceſſary we ſhould view him as he came from the hands of his Creator. We muſt know, in what ſtate he was placed, what were the duties reſulting from that ſtate, and what the powers whereby he was enabled to perform them. We muſt learn, whether he be now in the ſame ſtate, or whether an alteration in his

ſtate

ſtate may not have ſubjected him to new wants, and new obligations. Upon a knowledge of theſe particulars, every ſyſtem of religion and morality muſt be conſtructed, which is deſigned for the uſe of men. A ſyſtem, in which the conſideration of theſe hath no place, is like a courſe of diet preſcribed by a phyſician, unacquainted with his patient's conſtitution, and with the nature of the diſeaſe under which he has the misfortune to labour. DISC. I.

It is obvious to remark, that this knowlege of human nature, of what it was at the beginning, and what alterations have ſince happened in it, is a knowlege to the attainment of which no ſtrength of genius, no depth of reaſoning, no ſubtlety of metaphyſical diſquiſition can ever lead us. It is a matter of fact, and muſt be aſcertained, as matters of fact are, by evidence and teſtimony. But he only, who made man, can inform us, how man was made; with what endowments, and for what purpoſes. If he hath not done it, the world is, of

DISC. I. neceſſity, left in utter ignorance of ſo capital a point. And this reflection alone may ſupply the place of a thouſand arguments, to convince us that he hath done it.

We find an opinion current through heathen antiquity, that all is not right with the human race; that things were not at firſt as they are now, but that a change hath been introduced for the worſe. When the Philoſophers tell us, that mankind were ſent upon earth to do penance for crimes by them committed in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, what is it but ſaying, that man once was upright and happy; but that ceaſing to be upright he ceaſed to be happy; and that natural evil is the conſequence and puniſhment of moral? Nor is it at all difficult to diſcern, through the fictions of the poets, thoſe truths which gave birth to them, while we read of a golden age, when righteouſneſs and peace kiſſed each other; of a man framed of clay, and animated by a ſpark of celeſtial fire; of a woman endowed with every gift and grace from above;

above; and of the fatal caſket, out of which, when opened by her, a flight of calamities overſpread the earth; but not without a reſerve of HOPE, that, at ſome future period of refreſhment and reſtitution, they ſhould be done away. Such are the ſhadowy ſcenes, which, by the faint glimmering of tradition reflected from an original revelation, preſent themſelves in that night of the world, the æra of Pagan fable and deluſion, when the imaginations of poetry and the conjectures of philoſophy were equally unable to ſupply the information, which had been long loſt, concerning the origin of the world, of man, and of evil. DISC. I.

With this information we are furniſhed by the writings of Moſes, penned under the direction of him, who giveth to man the ſpirit of underſtanding, for the inſtruction of ages and generations. We are told, by whom the matter, of which our ſyſtem is compoſed, was brought into being; and in what manner the ſeveral objects around us were gradually and ſucceſſively formed,

DISC. I. till the whole, completely finiſhed, and ſurveyed by it's great author, was pronounced *good*, or fit, in every reſpect, to anſwer the end for which it was deſigned.

After this are related the particulars concerning the formation of man; the time of his production; the reſolution taken upon the occaſion; the materials of which he was compoſed; the divine image in which God created him; and the dominion over the creatures with which he was inveſted. It is intended in the following diſcourſe to offer ſuch conſiderations, as may be of uſe towards the explanation and illuſtration of theſe particulars in their order.

With regard to the *time* of man's formation, we may obſerve of the divine procedure, what is true of every human plan, concerted with wiſdom and foreſight; that which was firſt in intention was laſt in execution. Man, for whom all things were made, was himſelf made laſt of all. We are taught to follow the heavenly artiſt, ſtep

ſtep by ſtep, firſt in the production of the inanimate elements, next of vegetable, and then of animal life, till we come to the maſterpiece of the creation, man endued with reaſon and intellect. The houſe being built, it's inhabitant appeared; the feaſt being ſet forth, the gueſt was introduced; the theatre being decorated and illuminated, the ſpectator was admitted, to behold the ſplendid and magnificent ſcenery in the heavens above, and the earth beneath; to view the bodies around him moving in perfect order and harmony, and every creature performing the part allotted it in the univerſal drama; that ſeeing he might underſtand, and underſtanding adore it's ſupreme Author and Director. DISC. I.

Not that, even in the original and perfect ſtate of his intellectual powers, he was left to demonſtrate the being of a God, either *a priori* or *a poſteriori*. His Creator, we find, immediately manifeſted himſelf to him, and converſed with him, informing him, without all doubt, of what

DISC. I. had paſſed previous to his own exiſtence, which otherwiſe he never could have known; inſtructing him, how and for what purpoſe the world and man were made, and to whom he was bound to aſcribe all praiſe and glory on that account. The loſs of this inſtruction occaſioned ſome of his deſcendants, in after ages, to worſhip the creature inſtead of the Creator. Ignorant of him who gave the ſun for a light by day, they fell proſtrate before that bright image of it's Maker's glory, which to the eye of ſenſe appeared to be the God that governed the world.

The other parts of this ſyſtem were produced by the word of the Creator. "He "ſpake, and it was done." The elements were his ſervants: "He ſaid to one, Go, "and it went; to another, Come, and it "came; to a third, Do this," and the commiſſion was inſtantly executed. But to the formation of man (with reverential awe, and after the manner of men be it ſpoken) he ſeems more immediately to have addreſſed

addreſſed his power and wiſdom. "Let us "make man;" all things are now ready; let the work of creation be completed and crowned by the production of it's poſſeſſor and lord, who is to uſe, to enjoy, and to rule over it; "Let us make man." DISC. I.

The phraſeology in which this *reſolution* is couched is remarkable; "Let *us* make "man;" but the Old Teſtament furniſhes more inſtances of a ſimilar kind; "Behold, "man is become *like one of us*; Let *us* go "down, and confound their language; "Whom ſhall we ſend, and who will go "for *us?*" Theſe plural forms, thus uſed by the Deity, demand our attention.

Three ſolutions of the queſtion have been offered.

The firſt is that given by the Jews, who tell us, that in theſe forms, God ſpeaks of himſelf and his angels. But may we not aſk, upon this occaſion—"Who hath "known the mind of the Lord, or who "hath

DISC. I. "hath been his counſellor?" With which of the angels did he at any time vouchſafe to ſhare his works and his attributes? Could they have been his coadjutors in the work of creation, which he ſo often claims to himſelf, declaring he will not give the glory of it to another? Do we believe—do the Jews believe—did any body ever believe that man was made by angels, or made in the image and likeneſs of angels? Upon this opinion, therefore, we need not ſpend any more time. We know from whence it came, and for what end it was deviſed and propagated.

A ſecond account of the matter is, that the King of heaven adopts the ſtyle employed by the kings of the earth, who frequently ſpeak of themſelves in the plural number, to expreſs dignity and majeſty. But doth it ſeem at all reaſonable to imagine that God ſhould borrow his way of ſpeaking from a king, before man was created upon the earth? The contrary ſuppoſition would ſurely carry the air of more probability

probability with it, namely, that becauſe the Deity originally uſed this mode of expreſſion, therefore kings, conſidering themſelves as his delegates and repreſentatives, afterwards did the ſame. But however this might be, the interpretation, if admitted, will not ſuffice to clear the point. For, as it has been judiciouſly obſerved, though a king and governor may ſay *us* and *we*, there is certainly no figure of ſpeech, that will allow any ſingle perſon to ſay, "one of "us," when he ſpeaks only of himſelf. It is a phraſe that can have no meaning, unleſs there be more perſons than one concerned. DISC. I.

What then ſhould hinder us from accepting the third ſolution, given by the beſt expoſitors ancient and modern, and drawn from this conſideration, that in the unity of the divine eſſence there is a plurality of perſons coequal and coeternal, who might ſay, with truth and propriety, "Let "us make man;" and, "Man is become "like one of us?" Of ſuch a perſonality revelation

DISC. I. revelation informs us; it is that upon which the œconomy of man's redemption is founded; his creation, as well as that of the world, is, in different paſſages, attributed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; what more natural, therefore, than that, at his production, this form of ſpeech ſhould be uſed by the divine perſons? What more rational than to ſuppoſe, that a doctrine, ſo important to the human race, was communicated from the beginning, that men might know whom they worſhipped, and how they ought to worſhip? What other good and ſufficient reaſon can be given, why the name of God, in uſe among believers from the firſt, ſhould likewiſe be in the *plural* number, connected with verbs and pronouns in the *ſingular*[a]? It is true, we Chriſtians, with the New Teſtament in our hands, may not want theſe arguments to prove the doctrine: but why ſhould we overlook, or ſlight, ſuch very valuable evidence of it's having been revealed and received in the church of God,

[a] ברא אלהים Gen. i. 1.

from

from the foundation of the world? It is a satisfaction, it is a comfort to reflect, that, in this momentous article of our faith, we have patriarchs and prophets for our fathers; that they lived, and that they died in the belief of it; that the God[b] of Adam, of Noah, and of Abraham, is likewise our God; and that, when we adore him in three persons, and give glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, we do as it was done in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. DISC. I.

Proceed we to consider the *materials*, of which man was composed.

"The word of the Lord once came to "the prophet Jeremiah[c], saying, Arise, "and go down to the potter's house, and "there I will cause thee to hear my words. "Then he went down to the potter's "house, and behold he wrought a work "on the wheel. And the word of the "Lord came unto him, saying, Behold, as

[b] אלהים [c] Jer. xviii. 1.

"the

DISC. 1. "the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye "in mine hand."

A scene like this is presented to our imaginations by the words of Moses; "The "Lord God formed man out of the dust of "the ground;" he moulded[d] or modelled him as a potter doth; we see the work, as it were, upon the wheel, rising and growing under the hands of the divine artificer!

The human body was not made of the ecclestial elements, light and air; but of the more gross terrestrial matter, as being designed to receive and communicate notices of terrestrial objects, by organs of a nature similar to them. In this instance, as in another since, God seemeth to have "chosen "the base things of the world, to con-"found things honourable and mighty;" when of the dust of the ground he composed a frame, superior, in rank and dignity, to the heavens and all their hosts.

[d] יצר. [e] 1 Cor. i. 28.

They

They whoſe profeſſion leads them to examine the ſtructure of this aſtoniſhing piece of mechaniſm, theſe men ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the formation of the human body. A contemplation of it's parts, and their diſpoſition, brought Galen upon his knees, in adoration of the wiſdom with which the whole is contrived; and incited him to challenge any one, upon an hundred years ſtudy, to tell, how any the leaſt fibre or particle could have been more commodiouſly placed, either for uſe or beauty. While the world ſhall laſt, genius and diligence will be producing freſh proofs, that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made;" that "marvellous are the works," and, above all, this capital work of the Almighty; and that the hand which made it muſt needs be verily and indeed divine.

Into the body of man, thus conſtructed, we learn from Moſes, that God, "breathed "the breath of life, and man became a "living ſoul." The queſtion here will be,

Whether

DISC. I. Whether theſe words are intended to denote the rational and immortal ſoul, or the ſenſitive and animal life?

They are certainly ſometimes uſed in the lower of theſe acceptations. "Ceaſe ye "from man whoſe breath[f] is in his noſ-"trils. All creatures in whoſe noſtrils was "the breath of life[g] died by the flood." By theſe texts it appears, that the terms *ſpirit* and *breath*[h] are uſed to ſignify that animal life, which is ſupported mechanically, by reſpiration through the noſtrils.

But they are likewiſe uſed for the rational and immortal ſoul; witneſs thoſe words of the pſalmiſt, adopted by our Lord, when expiring on the croſs; "Into "thy hands I commend my ſpirit[i]." So again — "The ſpirit[k] ſhall return to God, "who gave it." And "The ſpirit of man[l] "is the candle of the Lord."

[f] נשמה. [g] נשמת רוח חיים. [h] רוח and נשמה.
[i] רוחי. [k] הרוח. [l] נשמת אדם.

Spiritual

DISC. I.

Spiritual eſſences and operations come not under the cognizance of thoſe ſenſes, which, during the preſent ſtate of probation, God has been pleaſed to make the inlets of our ideas. They must therefore be repreſented and deſcribed to us, in the way of compariſon and analogy, by ſuch language as is commonly ſtyled *figurative*, or *metaphorical*. Of animal life, begun and continued by reſpiration, we have a proper and ſufficient knowlege. From a contemplation of that life, and the manner in which it is ſupported by the air, we are directed to frame our notions of an higher life, maintained by the influence of an higher principle. For this purpoſe, the terms which denote the former are borrowed to expreſs the latter; and we find the words, tranſlated *ſpirit*, and *breath*, ſometimes uſed for one, and ſometimes for the other.

But when we conſider, that man, as other Scriptures do teſtify, has within him a rational ſoul, an immortal ſpirit, which, on the diſſolution of the body, returns to

DISC. I. God who gave it; that, in this original deſcription of his formation, we may reaſonably expect to find both parts of his compoſition mentioned; and that a perſonal act of the Deity, that of inſpiring the breath of life, is recorded with regard to him, which is not ſaid of the other creatures; we can hardly do otherwiſe than conclude, that the words were intended to denote not the animal life only, but alſo another life communicated with it, and repreſented by it; in a word, that man conſiſteth of a body ſo organized as to be ſuſtained in life by the action of the material elements upon it, and a rational immortal ſoul, ſupported, in a ſimilar manner, by the influence of a ſuperior and ſpiritual agency.

We had occaſion to obſerve above, that when the knowlege of the Creator, furniſhed at the beginning by Revelation, had been loſt in the heathen world, men paid to the works of his hands that adoration which was due to him. The material elements were inveſted with divinity and immortality,

mortality, and worſhipped as gods. It may now be farther obſerved, that to the ſoul of man, conſidered as a portion of these elements, was attributed the ſame divinity and immortality; and thus things natural were ſubſtituted in the place of things ſpiritual, a proper notion of which could not then be attained, for want of that inſtruction from above, which directs us how to tranſfer our ideas from one to the other, and to believe in the latter, as conceived through the medium of the former. So difficult has it ever been found, for the human mind, to pass the bounds of matter, and to explore the inviſible wonders of the ſpiritual world. And whoever obſerves the progreſs of that ſcheme, which is once more ſet up againſt Revelation by ſome, in our own and a neighbouring nation, who affect the title of *philoſophers* in oppoſition to that of *Chriſtians*, and whoſe abilities one cannot but lament to ſee employed in this manner, will perceive its tendency to introduce *materialiſm*, and to carry us back again to that ſtate of darkneſs, from which

DISC. II.

DISC. I. it pleaſed the Father of lights, in mercy to deliver us by the Goſpel of his Son.

But to return to the Moſaic account of man, of whoſe diſtinguiſhing excellencies we are taught to entertain the moſt exalted ſentiments, when we are told, that he was made "in the *image* and likeneſs of God." For what more can be ſaid of a creature, than that he is made after the ſimilitude of his Creator.

As "God is a Spirit," the ſimilitude here ſpoken of muſt be a ſpiritual ſimilitude, and the ſubject to which it relates muſt be the ſpiritual part of man, his rational and immortal ſoul.

To diſcover wherein ſuch image and likeneſs conſiſted, what better method can we take, than to enquire, wherein conſiſt that divine image and likeneſs, which, as the Scriptures of the New Teſtament inform us, were reſtored in human nature,

through

through the redemption and grace of Chriſt, who was manifeſted for that purpoſe? The image reſtored was the image loſt; and the image loſt was that in which Adam was created. DISC. I.

The expreſſions employed by the penmen of the New Teſtament plainly point out to us this method of proceeding. We read of the new man, "which after God is "*created*[m]; and of man being "renewed "after the image of him that *created* "him[n];" and the like. The uſe of the term *created* naturally refers us to man's firſt creation, and leads us to parallel that with his renovation, or new creation, by which he re-obtained those excellencies poſſeſſed at the beginning, but afterwards unhappily forfeited.

And what are these? — "Renewed in "*knowlege*, after the image of him that "created him — Put on the new man,

[m] Epheſ. iv. 24. [n] Coloſſ. iii. 10.

DISC. I. "which after God is created in *righteous-*
"*neſs* and *true holineſs*, οσιοτητι της αληθειας,
"the *holineſs* of, or according to *truth*."
The divine image, then, is to be found in the underſtanding, and the will; in the underſtanding which knows the truth, and in the will which loves it. For when the underſtanding judges that to be true which with God is true, the man is "renewed in "knowlege after the image of him that "created him;" when the will loves the truth, and all it's affections move in the purſuit and practice of it, the man is "new "created after God in righteouſneſs and ho-"lineſs." This divine image is reſtored in human nature by the word of Chriſt enlightening the underſtanding, and the grace of Chriſt rectifying the will. Theſe are, in the end, to render man what he was at firſt created, according to that paſſage in the writings of king Solomon, which is the ſhorteſt and beſt comment upon the words of Moſes—"God made man upright"—the original word ישר ſignifies *ſtraight*, *direct*;

there

there was no error in his underſtanding, no obliquity in his will. He who ſays this, ſays every thing. It is a full and comprehenſive account of man in his original ſtate; nothing can be added to it, or taken from it. DISC. I.

Such, then, was Adam, in the day when God crowned him king in Eden, and inveſted him with ſovereignty over the works of his hands, giving him *dominion* over "the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of "the air, and over the cattle, and over all "the earth, and over every creeping thing "that creepeth upon the earth."

It appears to have been the order of Providence, that while the fleſh continued in ſubjection to the ſpirit, and man to God, ſo long the creatures ſhould continue in ſubjection to man, as ſervants are ſubject to their lord and maſter. This original ſubjection we muſt ſuppoſe to have been univerſal and abſolute. From the creatures man has much to learn, but nothing to

DISC. 1.

fear. If, to anſwer the purpoſes of creation, or to convey to his mind ideas of his inviſible enemies, any where at that time wild and noxious, with regard to him they were tame and harmleſs. In perfect ſecurity he ſaw, he conſidered, he admired. But when he rebelled againſt his God, the creatures renounced their allegiance to him, and became in the hands of their common Creator inſtruments of his puniſhment.—"The beaſts of the field" were no longer "at peace with him." Yet, in conſequence of the new covenant and promiſe to redeem man and the world, we find it ſaid after the flood—"The fear of you "and the dread of you ſhall be upon every "beaſt of the earth, and upon every fowl "of the air, upon all that moveth upon "the earth, and upon all the fiſhes of the "ſea[r]." So far is the ſuperiority of the human ſpecies ſtill preſerved, that "every "kind of beaſts, and of birds, and of ſer-"pents, and things in the ſea, is tamed, "and hath been tamed of mankind[s]." In

[r] Gen. ix. 2. [s] James iii. 7.

ſome

ſome caſes, for the ſake of eminently holy perſons favoured by Heaven on that account, the inſtincts of the moſt ſavage and ravenous have been ſuſpended; as when ſome of every kind aſſembled and lodged together in the ark, and when the mouths of the lions were ſtopped in the den of Babylon, while the righteous and greatly beloved Daniel was there. The Redeemer of the world endued his diſciples with the original privilege—"Behold, I give you "power to tread on ſerpents, and on ſcor- "pions; and nothing ſhall by any means "hurt you[1]. And, agreeably to ſuch promiſe, St. Paul "ſhook off the viper into "the fire, and felt no harm[2]." The viii[th] Pſalm is a beautiful repreſentation of the extent of this privilege, as it was poſſeſſed at the beginning, by the firſt Adam, and as it hath been ſince reſtored to the ſecond —"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is "thy name in all the earth! Who haſt "ſet thy glory above the heavens. Out of

DISC. I.

[1] Luke x. 19. [2] Acts xxviii. 5.

"the

DISC. I. "the mouth of babes and ſucklings haſt "thou ordained ſtrength, becauſe of thine "enemies, that thou mighteſt ſtill the ene- "my and the avenger. When I conſider "thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the "moon and the ſtars which thou haſt or- "dained; what is man, that thou art "mindful of him? and the ſon of man, "that thou viſiteſt him? For thou haſt "made him a little lower than the angels, "and haſt crowned him with glory and "honour. Thou madeſt him to have do- "minion over the works of thy hands; "thou haſt put all things under his feet; "all ſheep and oxen, yea and the beaſts of "the field, the fowl of the air, and the "fiſh of the ſea, and whatſoever paſſeth "through the paths of the ſeas. O Lord "our Lord, how excellent is thy name in "all the earth!"

Let us indulge a few reflections on the foregoing particulars.

The imagination naturally endeavours to form

form ſome idea of the ſenſations that muſt have ariſen in the mind of the firſt man, when, awaking into exiſtence, with all his ſenſes and faculties perfect, he beheld the glory and beauty of the new created world. Faded as we muſt ſuppoſe it's glory and it's beauty now to be, enough ſtill remains, to excite continual wonder, praiſe, and adoration. Yet it is repreſented in the Scriptures of truth, as lying under a curſe, as groaning and travelling in pain, and as little better than a priſon, from which all, who are truly ſenſible of it's condition, and their own, wiſh and pray to be delivered, into the liberty of the children of God. But if ſuch be our priſon, what notions are we led to form of thoſe manſions, which our Lord is gone before to prepare for us, in his Father's houſe? Creation was finiſhed in ſix days; and we read, that, "on the ſeventh, God reſted from all his "work which he created and made[1]." But the tranſgreſſion of man would not

Disc. I.

[1] Gen. ii. 2.

ſuffer

DISC. I. ſuffer him to reſt. "My Father," ſays the bleſſed Jeſus, "worketh hitherto, and "I work[u]." Sin made it's way into the firſt creation, and is gradually deſtroying it, as a moth fretteth a garment—"Lift up "your eyes to the heavens, and look upon "the earth beneath; for the heavens ſhall "vaniſh away like ſmoke, and the earth "ſhall wax old like a garment, and they "that dwell therein ſhall die in like man-"ner[w]." "But we, according to his pro-"miſe, look for new heavens and a new "earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs[x]." We read of one, who, in viſion, "ſaw a "new heaven and a new earth, for the "firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed "away[y]." When the new creation ſhall be finiſhed and prepared, an act of omnipotence will be exerted, ſimilar to that which paſſed at the formation of Adam. The Lord God will again "form man out "of the duſt of the ground, and breathe "into his noſtrils the breath of life."

[u] John v. 17.
[w] Iſai. li. 6.
[x] 2 Peter iii. 13.
[y] Rev. xxi.

From

From his long ſleep in the chamber of the grave, he will awake to behold the never-fading glories of a world, which "will "have no need of the ſun, neither of the "moon, to ſhine in it; for the Lord God "and the Lamb," thoſe brighter and inextinguiſhable luminaries, ſhall enlighten it for ever[1]. The Almighty ſhall again with complacency ſurvey the works of his hands, and pronounce every thing he has made to be "very good;" he ſhall again reſt, on the ſeventh day; the children of the reſurrection ſhall enter into his reſt, and keep an eternal ſabbath. Let us "comfort one "another with theſe words."

A view of the different materials of which man is compoſed, may teach us to form a proper eſtimate of him. He ſtands between the two worlds, the natural and the ſpiritual, and partakes of both. His body is material, but it's inhabitant deſcends from another ſyſtem. His ſoul, like

[1] Rev. xxi. 23.

the

DISC. 1. the world from which it comes, is immortal; but his body, like the world to which it belongs, is frail and periſhable. From it's birth it contains in it the ſeeds and principles of diſſolution, towards which it tends every day and hour by the very means that nouriſh and maintain it, and which no art can protract beyond a certain term. In ſpite of precaution and medicine, "the evil days will come, and the years "draw nigh, when he ſhall ſay, I have no "pleaſure in them." Pains and ſorrows will ſucceed each other, as "the clouds "return after the rain," blackening the face of heaven, and darkening the ſources of light and joy. The hands, thoſe once active and vigorous "keepers of the houſe," grown paralytic, ſhall "tremble;" and "the ſtrong men," thoſe firm and able columns which ſupported it, ſhall "bow "themſelves," and ſink under the weight. The external "grinders" of the food, the teeth, "ſhall ceaſe becauſe they are few," and the work of maſtication ſhall be imperfectly performed. Dim ſuffuſion ſhall veil

veil the organs of ſight, "they that look DISC. I.
"out of the windows ſhall be darkened." "The doors, or valves, "ſhall be ſhut in "the ſtreets," or alleys of the body, when the digeſtive powers are weakened, and "the ſound of the" internal "grinding is "low." Sleep, if it light upon the eye-lids of age, will quickly remove again, and "he will riſe up" at the time when the firſt "voice of the bird," proclaims the approach of the morning. "All the daugh-"ters of muſic ſhall be brought low;" he will hear no more the voice of ſinging men, and ſinging women. Timidity and diſtruſt will predominate, and he will be alarmed at every thing; "he ſhall be "afraid of that which is high, and fears "ſhall be in the way." As the early "al-"mond tree," when it flouriſhes in full bloſſom, his hoary head ſhall be conſpicuous in the congregation, the ſure prognoſtic not of ſpring, alas, but of winter; he who, like "the graſhopper," in the ſeaſon of youth was ſo ſprightly in his motions, now ſcarce able to crawl upon the earth,

DISC. 1. earth, "shall be a burden" to himself; and, the organs of sense being vitiated and impaired, "desire" and appetite "shall fail." The spinal marrow, that "silver cord," with the infinite ramifications of the nerves, thence derived, will be relaxed, and lose it's tone; "and the golden bowl," the receptacle of the brain, from which it proceeds "shall be broken." The vessel, by which, as a "pitcher," the blood is carried back to the heart for a fresh supply, "shall "be broken at the fountain, and the "wheel," or instrument of circulation, which throws it forth again to the extremities of the body, "shall be broken at "the cistern."—When this highly finished piece of mechanism shall be thus disjointed and dissolved, "then shall the dust," of which is was framed, "return to the "earth as it was, and the spirit shall return "to God who gave it." Learn we from

* See the Portrait of Old Age, in a Paraphrase on the six former verses on the xii^th chapter of Ecclesiastes, by JOHN SMITH, M. D. of the COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS; reprinted in 1752, for E. WITHERS, at the Seven Stars, between the two Temple-Gates, Fleet-street.

hence

hence, to beſtow on each part of our compoſition that proportion of time and attention, which, upon a due conſideration of it's nature and importance, it ſhall appear to claim at our hands. DISC. I.

To ſtamp on man his own image, was the deſign of God in creating him; to reſtore that image, when loſt, was the deſign of God in redeeming him. Could greater honour have been done to human nature? Never may the guilt be ours of debaſing our nature and obliterating "this image and "ſuperſcription;" a ſpecies ſurely of treaſon againſt the majeſty of heaven. Sloth will obſcure the fair impreſſion; it's attendants, ignorance and vice, will deſtroy it. Let diligence therefore be appointed to watch over it, and to retouch, from time to time, the lines that are faded; till, the whole ſtanding confeſſed in knowlege, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs, men may glorify our father which is in heaven, while they behold his reſemblance upon earth. So ſhall we anſwer the ends of our creation

DISC. I. and redemption, and ſerve our generation in the moſt effectual manner. And though, when this is done, we muſt cloſe our eyes in death, and ſleep with our fathers; yet the hour cometh, in which we ſhall open them again, to "behold thy face, O God, "in righteouſneſs; we ſhall be ſatisfied, "when we awake with thy likeneſs[b]."

Was Adam inveſted with ſovereignty over the creatures? Obſerve we from hence, that man was made to rule. Majeſtic in his form, he was ordained to trample upon earth, and aſpire to heaven, which, without putting a force upon nature, he cannot but behold, and regard. In the original ſubjection of the creatures we ſee what ought to be that of every deſire and appetite, terreſtrial and animal, to the ruling principle within us. The ſubtlety of ſome creatures, and the fierceneſs of others, now exhibit to us the difficulty of ſubduing and governing the paſſions, broken looſe, like

[b] Pſ. xvii. 15.

them,

them, from the dominion of their maſter; inſomuch, that the apoſtle, who aſſerts, that every creature may be, and has been tamed of man, yet ſays of one part of man, the tongue, "it is a deadly evil, which no "man can tame," meaning by his own powers. Through the redemption and grace which are by Chriſt Jeſus, this dominion, as well as the other, is reſtored, not only over our own paſſions, but over ſtill more formidable opponents, the evil ſpirits in arms againſt us. For thus our Lord gave his diſciples power not only over the natural "ſerpents and ſcorpions," but over ſome, whoſe venom is of a more malignant and fatal kind; "over all the power "of THE ENEMY." The apoſtles returned, accordingly, crying out, "Lord, the very "DEVILS are ſubject unto us, through thy "name!" And we have a general promiſe, that, in our combats with them, God will give us victory, and bruiſe their leader, Satan himſelf, under our feet. Our Redeemer is exalted above the heavens and human nature in the ſecond Adam, reſtored to do-

DISC. I. minion over all the earth. And though, at preſent, the apoſtle's lot may be ours, to "fight with beaſts," with evil men, evil paſſions and evil ſpirits, yet through God we ſhall do great acts; it is he that ſhall tread down thoſe that riſe up againſt us; till finally triumphant over the laſt enemy, and exalted to the eternal throne, we ſhall view the earth beneath us, and the ſun and ſtars ſhall be duſt under our feet.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE II.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

GENESIS II. 8.

And the Lord God planted a garden eaſtward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

DISC. II.

IN a preceding diſcourſe ſome conſiderations were offered, tending to elucidate the particulars related by Moſes concerning the origination of man; namely, the time of his formation; the reſolution taken by the Deity on the occaſion; the materials of which he was compoſed; the divine image in which he was created; and the dominion over the creatures with which he was inveſted.

The words now read mark out the hiſtory of that habitation in which it pleaſed

DISC. II.

the Almighty to place him at the beginning, for the ſubject of our preſent enquiries—a ſubject not only curious, but highly intereſting. For if Levi be ſaid to have paid tithes to Melchizedek, as being in the loins of Abraham, at the time of that tranſaction; we may, in like manner, regard ourſelves, as having taken poſſeſſion of Eden; being in the loins of our anceſtor, when he did ſo. And though it can afford but ſmall comfort, to reflect upon the excellence of an inheritance which we have loſt, it may inſpire into us due ſentiments of gratitude and love towards that bleſſed perſon who hath recovered it for us. And thus every conſideration which enhances the value of the poſſeſſion, will proportionably magnify the goodneſs of our great benefactor.

For theſe reaſons, we ſometimes, perhaps, find ourſelves diſpoſed to lament the conciſeneſs and obſcurity of that account, which Moſes hath left us of man's primeval eſtate in paradiſe. But when we recollect, that to this account we owe all the information

information we have, upon ſo important a point, it will become us to be thankful that we have been told ſo much, rather than to murmur becauſe we have been told no more; and, inſtead of lamenting the obſcurity of the Moſaic account, to try whether, by diligence and attention, that obſcurity, may not be, in part, diſpelled. For though Moſes hath only given us a compendious relation of facts (and facts of the utmoſt importance may be related in very few words), that relation is ratified and confirmed in the Scriptures of both Teſtaments, in which are found many references and alluſions to it. By bringing theſe forth to view, and comparing them together, we may poſſibly be led to ſome agreeable ſpeculations concerning the ſituation of Adam in the Garden of Eden, the nature of his employment, and the felicity he there experienced.

On a ſubject ſo remote, and confeſſedly difficult, demonſtration will not be expected. Much of what is advanced, muſt be advanced rather as probable, than certain;

DISC. II. and where there is little positive information, the candour so often experienced will accept of such notices, as can be obtained by inference and deduction.

When we think of Paradise, we think of it as the seat of delight. The name EDEN authorises us so to do. It signifies PLEASURE; and the idea of pleasure is inseparable from that of a Garden, where man still seeks after lost happiness, and where, perhaps, a good man finds the nearest resemblance of it, which this world affords. "What is requisite," exclaims a great and original genius, "to make a wise and a "happy man, but reflection and peace? "And both are the natural growth of a "Garden. A Garden to the virtuous is a "Paradise still extant; a Paradise unlost[a]." The culture of a Garden, as it was the first employment of man, so it is that, to which the most eminent persons in different ages have retired, from the camp and the cabinet, to pass the interval between a life of action, and a removal hence. When old

[a] Dr. YOUNG—*Centaur not fabulous*, p. 61.

Diocletian

Diocleſian was invited from his retreat, to reſume the purple which he had laid down ſome years before, "Ah," ſaid he, "could "you but ſee thoſe fruits and herbs of "mine own raiſing at Salona, you would "never talk to me of empire!" An accompliſhed ſtateſman of our own country, who ſpent the latter part of his life in this manner, hath ſo well deſcribed the advantages of it, that it would be injuſtice to communicate his ideas in any words but his own. "No other ſort of abode," ſays he, "ſeems to contribute ſo much both to "the tranquillity of mind, and indolence "of body. The ſweetneſs of the air, the "pleaſantneſs of the ſmell, the verdure of "plants, the cleanneſs and lightneſs of "food, the exerciſe of working or walk-"ing; but, above all, the exemption from "care and ſolicitude, ſeem equally to fa-"vour and improve both contemplation "and health, the enjoyment of ſenſe and "imagination, and thereby the quiet and "eaſe both of body and mind. A Garden "has been the inclination of kings, and "the

DISC. 11.

DISC. II.

"the choice of philoſophers; the common "favourite of public and private men; the "pleaſure of the greateſt, and the care of "the meaneſt; an employment and a poſ-"ſeſſion, for which no man is too high, "nor too low. If we believe the Scrip-"tures," concludes he, "we muſt allow, "that God Almighty eſteemed the life of "man in a Garden the happieſt he could "give him; or elſe he would not have placed "Adam in that of Eden[d]."

The Garden of Eden had, doubtleſs, all the perfection it could receive from the hands of Him, who ordained it to be the manſion of his favourite creature. We may reaſonably preſume it to have been the earth in miniature, and to have contained ſpecimens of all natural productions as they appeared, without blemiſh, in an unfallen world; and theſe diſpoſed in admirable order, for the purpoſes intended. And it may be obſerved, that when, in after times, the penmen of the Scriptures have

[d] Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, *Gardens of Epicurus.*

occaſion

occaſion to deſcribe any remarkable degree of fertility and beauty, of grandeur and magnificence, they refer us to the Garden of Eden. "He beheld all the plain well "watered as the Garden of the Lord[e]. "The land was as the Garden of Eden "before them, but behind them a deſolate "wilderneſs[f]." The prophet Ezekiel, at the command of God, for an admonition to Pharaoh, thus portrays the pride of the Aſſyrian empire, under the ſplendid and majeſtic imagery afforded by vegetation in it's moſt flouriſhing ſtate. "The Aſſyrian "was a cedar in Lebanon, fair of branches, "and with a ſhadowing ſhroud, and of an "high ſtature, and his top was among the "thick boughs. The waters made him "great, the deep ſet him up on high, "with her rivers running round about his "plants, and ſent out her little rivers to "all the trees in the field. Therefore his "height was exalted above all the trees of "the field, and his boughs were multi- "plied, and his branches became long be- "cauſe of the multitude of waters when

DISC. II.

[e] Gen. xiii. 10. [f] Joel ii. 3.

"he

DISC. II.

"he ſhot forth.—Thus was he fair in his "greatneſs, and in the length of his "branches; for his root was by great wa-"ters. The cedars in the Garden of God "could not hide him, nor was any tree in "the Garden of God like unto him in his "beauty. I have made him fair by the "multitude of his branches; ſo that all "the trees of Eden, that were in the Gar-"den of God, envied him[a]." After having "related the fall of his towering and exten-"ſive empire, the prophet makes the appli-"cation to the King of Egypt: "To whom "art thou thus like, in glory and great-"neſs, among the trees of Eden? Yet "ſhalt thou be brought down with the "trees of Eden, to the lower parts of the "earth." In another place we find the following ironical addreſs to the King of Tyre, as having attempted ro rival the true God, and the glories of his Paradiſe. "Thou "ſealeſt up the ſum full of wiſdom, and "perfect in beauty. Thou haſt been in "Eden in the Garden of God: every pre-"cious ſtone was thy covering—thou waſt

[a] Ezek. xxxi. 3, &c.

"upon

" upon the holy mountain of God—thou DISC.
" waſt perfect in thy ways, from the day II.
" that thou waſt created, until iniquity
" was found in thee—Thine heart was
" lifted up becauſe of thy beauty, thou haſt
" corrupted thy wiſdom, by reaſon of thy
" brightneſs: I will caſt thee to the ground;
" I will lay thee before kings, that they
" may behold thee[b]."

Traditions and traces of this original Garden ſeem to have gone forth into all the earth, though, as an elegant writer juſtly obſerves, " they muſt be expected to
" have grown fainter and fainter in every
" tranſfuſion from one people to another.
" The Romans probably derived their no-
" tion of it, expreſſed in the gardens of
" Flora, from the Greeks, among whom
" this idea ſeems to have been ſhadowed
" out under the ſtories of the gardens of
" Alcinous. In Africa they had the gar-
" dens of the Heſperides, and in the eaſt
" thoſe of Adonis. The term of *Horti*
" *Adonidis* was uſed by the ancients to ſig-

[b] Ezek. xxviii. 12, &c.

" nify

DISC. II. "nify *gardens of pleaſure*, which anſwers "ſtrangely to the very name of Paradiſe, "or the garden of Eden[1]." In the writings of the poets, who have laviſhed all the powers of genius and the charms of verſe upon the ſubject, theſe and the like counterfeit or ſecondary paradiſes, the copies of the true, will live and bloom, ſo long as the world itſelf ſhall endure.

It hath been already ſuggeſted, that a Garden is calculated no leſs for the improvement of the mind, than for the exerciſe of the body; and we cannot doubt, but that peculiar care would be taken of that moſt important end, in the diſpoſition of the Garden of Eden.

From the ſituation and circumſtances of Adam, it ſhould not ſeem probable, that an all-wiſe and all-gracious Creator would leave him in that ſtate of ignorance in which, ſince the days of Fauſtus Socinus, it hath been but too much the faſhion to

[1] SPENCE's Polymetis, cited in Letters on Mythology, p. 126.

repreſent

repreſent him. For may we not argue in ſome ſuch manner as the following? DISC. II.

If ſo fair a world was created for the uſe and ſatisfaction of his terreſtrial part, formed out of the duſt, can we imagine, that the better part, the immortal ſpirit from above, the inhabitant of the fleſhly tabernacle prepared for it, ſhould be left in a ſtate of deſtitution and deſolation, unprovided with wiſdom, it's food, it's ſupport, and it's delight?

If men, ſince the falls and labouring under all the diſadvantages occaſioned by it, have been enabled to make thoſe attainments in knowlege which they certainly have made; and we find the underſtanding of a Solomon replete with every ſpecies of wiſdom, human and divine; can we conceive ignorance to have been the characteriſtic of the firſt formed father of the world, created with all his powers and faculties complete and perfect, and living under the immediate tuition of God?

If

DISC. II.

If upon the trial of Adam, as the head and repreſentative of mankind, their fate, as well as his own, both in time and eternity, was to depend, can we ever think, his Maker would expoſe him to ſuch a trial, with a mind not better informed than that of a child or an idiot?

If redemption reſtored what was loſt by the fall, and the ſecond Adam was a counterpart of the firſt, muſt we not conceive Adam to have once been what man is, when reſtored by grace to "the image of "God in wiſdom and holineſs?" And does not he, who degrades the character of the *Son of God*[k] in Paradiſe, degrade in proportion the character of that other *Son of God*, and the redemption and reſtoration which are by him?

Our firſt father differed from all his deſcendants in this particular, that he was not to attain the uſe of his underſtanding by a gradual proceſs from infancy, but

[k] Luke iii. 38.—"Which was the ſon of Adam, which "was the *Son of God.*"

came

came into being in full ſtature and vigour of mind as well as body. He found creation likewiſe in it's prime. It was morning with man and the world.

We are not certain with regard to the time allowed him, to make his obſervations upon the different objects with which he found himſelf ſurrounded; but it ſhould ſeem, either that ſufficient time was allowed him for that end, or that he was enabled, in ſome extraordinary manner, to pervade their eſſences, and diſcover their properties. For we are informed, that God brought the creatures to him, that he might impoſe upon them ſuitable names; a work which, in the opinion of Plato[1], muſt be aſcribed to God himſelf. The uſe and intent of names is to expreſs the natures of the things named; and in the knowlege of thoſe natures, at the beginning, God, who made them, muſt have been man's inſtructor. It is not likely, that, without ſuch an inſtructor, men could

[1] Τα πρωτα ονομαται οι Θεοι ιδισαν—In Cratylo.

DISC. II. ever have formed a language at all; ſince it is a taſk which requires much thought; and the great maſters of reaſon ſeem to be agreed that without language we cannot think to any purpoſe. However that may be, from the original impoſition of names by our firſt parent, we cannot but infer that his knowlege of things natural muſt have been very eminent and extenſive; not inferior, we may ſuppoſe, to that of his deſcendant king Solomon, who "ſpake of "trees, from the cedar to the hyſſop, and "of beaſts, and fowl, and creeping things "and fiſhes." It is therefore probable, that Plato aſſerted no more than the truth, when he aſſerted, according to the traditions he had gleaned up in Egypt and the eaſt, that the firſt man was of all men Φιλοσοφωτατος, the greateſt philoſopher.

As man was made for the contemplation of God here, and for the enjoyment of him hereafter, we cannot imagine, that his knowlege would terminate on earth, though it took it's riſe there. Like the patriarch's ladder, it's foot was on earth, but

but it's top, doubtleſs, reached to heaven. By it the mind aſcended from the creatures to the Creator, and deſcended from the Creator to the creatures. It was the golden chain, which connected matter and ſpirit, preſerving a communication between the two worlds. DISC. II.

That God had revealed and made himſelf known to Adam, appears from the circumſtances related; namely, that he took him, and put him into the garden of Eden; that he converſed with him, and communicated a law, to be by him obſerved; that he cauſed the creatures to come before him, and brought Eve to him. In theſe tranſactions, God probably aſſumed ſome viſible appearance; becauſe, otherwiſe than by ſuch aſſumed appearance, no man, while in the body, can ſee God. And we find, by what paſſed after the fatal tranſgreſſion, that "the *voice* or *ſound* of "the Lord God walking in the garden," was a voice or ſound to which Adam had been accuſtomed, though guilt for the firſt time had made him afraid of it.

DISC. II.

If there was at the beginning this familiar intercourſe between Jehovah and Adam, and he vouchſafed to converſe with him as he afterwards did with Moſes, "as "a man converſeth with his friend," there can be no reaſonable doubt, but that he inſtructed him, as far as was neceſſary, in the knowlege of his Maker, of his own ſpiritual and immortal part, of the adverſary he had to encounter, of the conſequences to which diſobedience would ſubject him, and of thoſe inviſible glories, a participation of which was to be the reward of his obedience.

When God, in after times, ſelected a peculiar people to be his church and heritage, to receive the law from his mouth, and to be the guardians of his promiſes, he "choſe one place to place his name "there;" to be the place of his reſidence, where he appeared and was conſulted. He gave directions for the conſtruction of a temple, or houſe, in a particular manner appropriated to him, and called his; which though

though compoſed of worldly elements, was ſo framed as to exhibit an apt reſemblance, model, or pattern of heavenly things; to ſerve as a ſchool for inſtruction, as a ſanctuary for devotion. Might not the Garden of Eden be a kind of temple, or ſanctuary, to Adam; a place choſen for the reſidence and appearance of God; a place deſigned to repreſent and give him ideas of heavenly things; a place ſacred to contemplation and devotion? Something of this ſort ſeems to be intimated by the account we have of the Garden in the ſecond chapter of Geniſis, and to be confirmed by the references and illuſions to it, in other parts of the Scriptures. DISC. II.

With this view we may obſerve, that though Paradiſe was created with the reſt of the world; yet we are informed, the hand of God was in a more eſpecial manner employed in preparing this place for the habitation of man. "The Lord God "planted a Garden eaſtward in Eden. And "out of the ground the Lord God made

DISC. II.

" to grow every tree that is pleaſant to the " ſight, and good for food. And a river " went out of Eden, to water the garden; " and from thence it was parted, and be- " came into four heads." Thus the great architect of the univerſe, he who, in the language of the apoſtle, " built all things," is deſcribed as ſelecting, diſpoſing, and adorning this wonderful and happy ſpot, wherein was to be placed the creature made after his own image and likeneſs, but a little lower than the angels. Does not this circumſtance ſuggeſt to us, that ſomething more was intended, than what generally enters into our idea of a Garden?

Whenever the Garden of Eden is mentioned in the ſcriptures, it is called " the " Garden of God," or " the Garden of " the Lord," expreſſions which denote ſome peculiar deſignation of it to ſacred purpoſes, ſome appropriation to God and his ſervice, as is confeſſedly the caſe with many ſimilar phraſes; ſuch as " houſe of " God, altar of God, man of God," and the

the like; all implying, that the perſons and things ſpoken of were conſecrated to him, and ſet apart for a religious uſe. DISC. II.

When it is ſaid, "The Lord God took "the man, and put him into the Garden of "Eden, to DRESS it, and to KEEP it," the words undoubtedly direct us to conceive of it, as a place for the exerciſe of the body. We readily acquieſce in this, as the truth, but not as the whole truth; it being difficult to imagine, that ſo noble a creature, the lord of the world, ſhould have no other, or higher employment. Much more ſatisfaction will be found in ſuppoſing, that our firſt parents, while thus employed, like the prieſts under the law, while they miniſtered in the temple, were led to contemplations of a more exalted nature, "ſerving to the example and ſha-"dow of heavenly things." The powers of the body and the faculties of the mind might be ſet to work at the ſame time, by the ſame objects. And it is well known, that the words here uſed[m], do as frequent-

[m] עבד and שמר.

DISC. II.

ly denote mental as corporeal operations; and under the ideas of DRESSING and KEEPING the ſacred Garden, may fairly imply the CULTIVATION and OBSERVATION of ſuch religious truths as were pointed out by the external ſigns and ſacraments which Paradiſe contained.

That ſome of the objects in Eden were of a ſacramental nature, we can hardly doubt, when we read of "the tree of "knowledge," and "the tree of life." The fruit of a material tree could not, by any virtue inherit in it, convey "the knowlege "of good and evil," or cauſe that, by eating it, a man ſhould "live for ever." But ſuch fruit might be ordained as a ſacrament, upon the participation of which, certain ſpiritual effects ſhould follow. This is entirely conformable to reaſon, to the nature of man, and of religion.

It is remarkable, that, in the earlieſt ages, a cuſtom ſhould be found to prevail, both among the people of God, and idolaters, of

of ſetting apart and conſecrating gardens and groves, for the purpoſe of religious worſhip. Thus Abraham, we are told, "planted a tree, or grove, at Beerſheba, "and called on the name of the ever-"laſting God[n]." The worſhippers of falſe Gods are deſcribed, in the writings of the prophets, as "ſacrificing in gardens," as "purifying themſelves in gardens," behind "one tree in the midſt;" and it is foretold, that they ſhould be "aſhamed for the oaks "which they had deſired, and confounded "for the gardens which they had choſen[o]." A ſurpriſing uniformity in this point may be traced through all the different periods of idolatry, as ſubſiſting among the Canaanites, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans. Groves were dedicated to the Gods, and particular ſpecies of trees were ſacred to particular deities. The ſame uſage prevailed among the Druids, in theſe parts of the world. And to this day, the ailes of our Gothic churches and DISC. II.

[n] Gen. xxi. 33. [o] Iſai. lxv. 3. lxvi. 17.

cathedrals

DISC. II. cathedrals are evidently built in imitation of thoſe arched groves, which of old ſupplied the place of temples. It is not, therefore, without reaſon, that the author of a learned diſſertation on the ſubject makes the following remark — "Theſe were the "hallowed fanes of the ancients, in which "they performed divine worſhip. And in-"deed, if we would trace up this rite "to it's origin, we muſt have recourſe to "the true God himſelf, who inſtituted in "Paradiſe a ſacred garden, or grove; or-"dained Adam to be the high prieſt of it, "and conſecrated in it two trees, for a public "teſtimony of religion."

But upon the ſuppoſition now made, that the Garden of Eden ſerved as a kind of Temple for our firſt parents, might we not expect to find ſome reſemblance of it in the tabernacle and temple afterwards erected, by the appointment of God, for his reſidence in the midſt of his people Iſrael? The queſtion is by no means abſurd, eſpecially if we recollect, that it was the deſign

ſign of the Moſaic ſanctuary, with it's apparatus, to prefigure the reſtoration of thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings, which were forfeited and loſt by the tranſgreſſion in Paradiſe. Let us therefore enquire what ſatisfaction the Scriptures will afford us upon this point. DISC. II.

The principal objects in the Garden of Eden, with which Revelation as brought us acquainted, are the plantations of trees, and the rivers of water, by which thoſe plantations were nouriſhed and ſupported in glory and beauty. Was there any thing of this ſort in or about the tabernacle and temple?

With regard to the plantations, two paſſages in the Pſalms incline us to think there were ſuch in the courts of the Jewiſh ſanctuary, as well as in that of Eden: "I "am like a green olive-tree in the houſe of "God[p]. The righteous ſhall flouriſh like "a palm tree, he ſhall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Thoſe that be planted in

[p] Pſ. lii. 8.

"the

DISC. 11. "the houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in "the courts of our God. They ſhall bring "forth fruit in old age; they ſhall be fat "and flouriſhing [q]." Theſe texts ſeem to ſuppoſe the real exiſtence of ſuch plantations, and, at the ſame time, to intimate the end and deſign of them, namely, to repreſent the progreſs and improvement of the faithful in virtue, through the influence of the divine favour. The ſame pleaſing and expreſſive image is employed to the ſame purpoſe, in the firſt Pſalm — "He "ſhall be like a tree planted by the rivers "of water, that bringeth forth his fruit "in his ſeaſon; his leaf alſo ſhall not "wither, and whatever he doth ſhall proſ-"per."

As to the rivers of water, which ſupplied and refreſhed the Garden of Eden and all it's productions, we meet with ſomething analogous to them, both in the tabernacle and temple.

[q] Pſ. xcii. 12.

During

During the journey of the children of Iſrael from Egypt to Canaan, the camp in general and the ſacred tabernacle in particular were ſupplied with water in a miraculous manner, not only at the time when Moſes ſmote the rock, but the ſame ſupply accompanied them afterwards—"They "drank of that rock," that is, the water of that rock, "which followed them." "He led thee (ſays Moſes) through that "great and terrible wilderneſs, wherein "were fiery ſerpents and ſcorpions, and "drought, where there was no water; "who made water to flow for thee out of "the rock of flint[t]." And theſe waters, like thoſe in Eden, were of a ſacramental nature. "They did all drink the ſame "ſpiritual drink; for they drank of that "ſpiritual rock which followed them, and "that rock was Chriſt[u]." How lively a repreſentation of that heavenly grace, which comforts our weary ſpirits, and enables us to accompliſh our journey through the wilderneſs of life!

[t] Deut. viii. 15. [u] 1 Cor. x. 4.

If

DISC. II.

If from the tabernacle we proceed to the temple, we are there preſented with the ſacred ſtreams of Siloah, breaking forth and flowing from the mount of God. In Ezekiel's famous viſion of the new temple, there is a wonderful deſcription, founded on the real ſituation of things at mount Sion, explaining their ſignification, and unavoidably carrying our thoughts back to the waters and plantations of the original ſanctuary in Eden. "Afterward he brought "me again unto the door of the houſe, "and behold waters iſſued out from under "the threſhold of the houſe eaſtward.— "Then ſaid he to me, Theſe waters iſſue "out toward the eaſt country, and go "down into the deſert, and go into the "ſea: which being brought forth into the "ſea, the waters ſhall be healed. And it "ſhall come to paſs, that every thing that "liveth, which moveth, whitherſoever the "river ſhall come, ſhall live—And by the "river upon the bank thereof, on this "ſide, and on that ſide, ſhall grow all trees "for meat, whoſe leaf ſhall not fade; nei-

"ther

"ther ſhall the fruit thereof be conſumed: DISC.
"it ſhall bring forth new fruit according II.
"to its months, becauſe their waters iſſued
"out of the ſanctuary; and the fruit
"thereof ſhall be for meat, and the leaves
"thereof for medicine[t]."

When the prophets have occaſion to foretel the great and marvellous change to be effected in the moral world, under the evangelical diſpenſation, they frequently borrow their ideas and expreſſions from the hiſtory of that garden, in which innocence and felicity once dwelt together, and which they repreſent as again ſpringing up and blooming in the wilderneſs. Of the many paſſages which occur, two or three only ſhall be recited. "The Lord will com-
fort Sion, he will comfort all her waſte
"places; he will make her wilderneſs like
"Eden, and her deſert like the Garden of
"the Lord: joy and gladneſs ſhall be
"found therein, thankſgiving and the
"voice of melody[u];" ſuch joy and glad-

[t] Ezek. xlvii. 1, et ſeq. [u] Iſai. li. 3.

neſs,

DISC. II. neſs, ſuch thankſgiving and melody, at the reſtitution of all things, as were at their first creation, when "God ſaw every thing "he had made, and behold, it was very "good;"—when "the morning ſtars ſang "together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted "for joy."—"When the poor and needy "ſeek water, and there is none, and their "tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will "hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not "forſake them. I will open rivers in high "places, and fountains in the midſt of the "vallies; I will make the wilderneſs a "pool of water, and the dry land ſprings "of water. I will plant in the wilderneſs "the cedar, the ſhittah tree, and the myr-"tle, and the oil tree; I will ſet in the "deſart the fir tree, and the pine, and the "box tree together: that they may ſee, "and know, and conſider, and underſtand "together, that the hand of the Lord hath "done this, and the holy one of Iſrael "hath created it[w]." "The wilderneſs and "the ſolitary place ſhall be glad for them,

[w] Isai. xli. 17.

"and

" and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom DISC.
" as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, II.
" and rejoice even with joy and singing;
" the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto
" it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon:
" they shall see the glory of the Lord, and
" the excellency of our God *."

At the time appointed, these predictions received their accomplishment. Men " saw " the glory of the Lord, and the excel- " lency of our God." By the death and resurrection of the Redeemer, lost Paradise was regained; and it's inestimable blessings, wisdom, righteousness and holiness, are now to be found and enjoyed in the Christian church. But as men are still men, and not angels, those blessings are still represented and conveyed by sacramental symbols, analogous to the original ones in Eden. From the sacred font flows the water of life, to purify, to refresh, to comfort; " a river goes out of Eden, to water " the garden," and to " baptize all nations,"

* Isai. xxxv. 1.

DISC. II. while the euchariſt anſwers to the fruits of the tree of life: at the holy table, we may now "put forth our hands, and take, and "eat, and live for ever."

Let us go one ſtep farther, and conſider the ſtate of things, in the *heavenly* kingdom of our Lord. There, it is true, all figures and ſhadows, ſymbols and ſacraments, ſhall be no more, becauſe faith will there be loſt in viſion, and we ſhall "know even as we are known." But in the mean time, till we attain that perfect conſummation, was any perſon admitted to a ſight of heaven, and the wonders that are therein, he could no otherwiſe deſcribe them to us, who are yet in the body, than by the way of picture and ſimilitude. This was the caſe of St. Paul. In a divine ecſtaſy, he had been caught up, and made to ſee and hear things, which he could not impart to others on account of their incapacity to receive them. What then does he? He refers us to the habitation of our firſt parents, for a general and comparative idea

idea of them. "I knew a man (ſays he) DISC. "who was caught up into Paradiſe." Our II. Lord, giving the penitent thief to underſtand, that his ſorrows would ſoon be at an end, and he ſhould paſs, with his Saviour, into a place of reſt and joy, uſes the ſame expreſſion—"This day ſhalt thou be with "me in Paradiſe." The beloved diſciple, who was frequently in the ſpirit tranſlated to thoſe celeſtial manſions which Chriſt is gone to prepare for us, gives a more particular and extended deſcription of them. But how? By bringing to our view all Eden, it's waters and plantations, together with thoſe ſeen by Ezekiel, in his viſion of the new temple. "He ſhewed me a pure "river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, "proceeding out of the throne of God, "and of the Lamb.—And of either ſide "of the river was there the tree of life, "which bare twelve manner of fruits, and "yielded her fruit every month; and the "leaves of the tree were for the healing of "the nations.—To him that overcometh "will I give to eat of the tree of life,

DISC. II. "which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe "of God.—Bleſſed are they that do his "commandments, that they may have "right to the tree of life—And the ſpirit "and the bride ſay, Come. And let him "that heareth ſay, Come. And let him "that is atheiſt come; and whoſoever will, "let him take the waters of life freely." In theſe paſſages, the divine ſcenery is evidently borrowed from objects once really exiſting in the terreſtrial Paradiſe, and employed to aid our conceptions, in apprehending celeſtial glories. If, therefore, we are taught, that heaven reſembles the Garden of Eden, it ſeems fair and reaſonable to conclude, that the Garden of Eden reſembled heaven, and was, from the beginning, intended ſo to do; that, like the temple under the law, and the church under the goſpel, it was, to it's happy poſſeſſors, a place choſen for the reſidence of God; a place deſigned to repreſent and furniſh them with ideas of heavenly things; a place ſacred to contemplation and devotion; in one word, that it was the primitive

temple

temple and church, formed and conſe- DISC. II.
crated for the uſe of man, in his ſtate of innocence. There, undiſturbed by care, and as yet unaſſailed by temptation, all his faculties perfect, and his appetites in ſubjection, he walked with God, as a man walketh with his friend, and enjoyed communion with Heaven, though his abode was upon earth. He ſtudied the works of God, as they came freſh from the hands of the workmaſter, and in the creation, as in a glaſs, he was taught to behold the glories of the Creator. Trained, in the ſchool of Eden, by the material elements of a viſible world, to the knowlege of one that is immaterial and inviſible, he found himſelf excited by the beauty of the picture, to aſpire after the tranſcendent excellence of the divine original. This ſacred Garden the firſt Adam, by tranſgreſſion loſt; but all the bleſſings, ſignified and repreſented by it, have been, through the ſecond Adam, reſtored to his poſterity. In our ſtead, he ſubjected himſelf to the vengeance of "the flaming ſword," and re-

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gained for us an entrance into Eden. For, "when he overcame the ſharpneſs of "death, he opened the kingdom of heaven "to all believers." He is himſelf "the "Tree of Life in the midſt of the Paradiſe "of God:" and, by the effuſion of his Spirit, he gives us to drink "rivers of "living water." In his church here below, he has all along communicated, and ſtill communicates his gifts, by external ſacraments, which ſerve at once for ſigns, as means, and as pledges: but, admitted to the church above, we ſhall ſee and taſte them, as they are. "Thou," O Lord Jeſus, "ſhalt ſhew us," for thou only canſt now ſhew us "the path of LIFE," the "way to "the tree of life," and introduce us to the truth and ſubſtance of all that was ſhadowed out by the bliſsful ſcenes of Eden; for "in thy preſence is the fulneſs of JOY, and "at thy right-hand there are PLEASURES for "evermore."

DIS-

DISCOURSE III.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

GENESIS II. Part of Verſe 9.

The Tree of Life alſo in the midſt of the Garden.

SOME arguments were offered upon a former occaſion, tending to prove, that the Garden of Eden, laid out and planted by the hand of the Almighty, for the habitation of our firſt parents, in a ſtate of innocence and felicity, was of a figurative and ſacramental nature; that, like the temple under the law, and the church under the goſpel, it was, to it's happy poſſeſſors, a place choſen for the reſidence of God; a place deſigned to repreſent, and furniſh them with ideas of heavenly things; a place ſacred to contemplation and devotion.

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Among the objects preſented to us, there is one, which, though then taken into the general account with the reſt, may ſeem to claim a more particular attention. It ſtands conſpicuous in the Moſaic deſcription, the capital figure in that beautiful piece. It is ſaid to have been placed in the centre of Eden, like the ſun of the little ſyſtem, and bears a name ſufficiently calculated to awaken curioſity. The inſpired hiſtorian having informed us, that "the Lord God "cauſed to grow out of the ground every "tree that was pleaſant to the ſight, and "good for food;" every thing in the vegetable way either uſeful or ornamental; adds—"The Tree of Life alſo in the "midſt of the garden."

Life, we know, as it relates to man, is twofold; that of the body, and that of the ſoul; animal and ſpiritual; temporal and eternal. Each requires to be ſupported by a nutriment adapted to it's nature, and ſupplied by ſomething external to itſelf. The food of the body is, like the body, material,

terial, and cometh out of the earth; the food of the ſoul is, like the ſoul, ſpiritual, and cometh down from heaven. The Tree of Life was, doubtleſs, a material tree, producing material fruit, proper, as ſuch, for the nouriſhment of the body. The queſtion will be, whether it was intended to be eaten, in common for that end alone; or whether it was not rather ſet apart, to be partaken of, at a certain time, or times, as a ſymbol, or ſacrament of that celeſtial principle, which nouriſhes the ſoul unto immortality; meaning, by that term, not a natural immortality, or bare exiſtence, but that divine, ſpiritual, eternal life, which was loſt by the fall, and the reſtitution of which is now "the gift of God, through "Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." DISC. III.

If it be ſuppoſed, that the Tree of Life was deſigned ſolely for the ſupport of the body of man, there will appear no reaſon for it's being diſtinguiſhed, as it is by it's appellation, from the other trees of the garden, which were all, in that ſenſe, equally

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equally *trees of life*, being, as we are told, "good for food." And indeed, the matter ſeems to be clearly determined otherwiſe, by the twenty-ſecond verſe of the third chapter, where we find fallen man excluded from Paradiſe, "leſt he ſhould put forth "his hand, and take alſo of the fruit of "the Tree of Life, and eat, and live FOR "EVER." Immortality therefore was to have been obtained, according to God's original appointment, by eating the fruit of the Tree of Life; not ſurely, as the Jews idly talk, by any medicinal quality, or virtue, preſerving the eater from ſickneſs and death, neither of which, by the way, was in the world, till introduced by ſin. No; the thing ſpeaks itſelf. A material tree could only confer eternal life as a divinely inſtituted ſymbol, or ſacrament; as "an outward viſible ſign of an inward "ſpiritual grace, given to Adam, as a "means whereby he was to receive the "ſame, and a pledge to aſſure him there-"of." Hereby he would be continually

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reminded

reminded of the truth communicated to him, without all doubt, from the beginning; that there was another and a better life than that led by him in the terreſtrial and figurative Paradiſe; a life, on which he was to ſet his affections, and to which he was to look, as the end, the reward, the crown of his obedience; a life, ſupported, as it was given, by emanation from that Being, who only hath life in himſelf, and is the fountain, from which, in various ways, it flows to all his creatures. Of Him, as the glorious ſun of the intellectual world, and of his gracious gift, ſtreaming, like light through the heavens, to enliven and bleſs the ſpiritual ſyſtem, the Tree of Life, with it's fruit, in the midſt of Eden, is apprehended to have been ordained, as an inſtructive and comfortable ſymbol; that ſo a memorial of his abundant goodneſs might be ſhewn upon earth, and new created man might ſing of his righteouſneſs. DISC. III.

The ſacramental deſignation of the Tree of Life in Paradiſe may be farther evinced, perhaps,

DISC. III. perhaps, by a paſſage or two in the book of St. John's Revelation. "To him that over-"cometh," ſays the captain of our ſalvation, "will I give to eat of the Tree of "Life, which is in the midſt of the Para-"diſe of God [b]." And again — "Bleſſed "are they that do his commandments, "that they may have right to the Tree of "Life [c]." By "eating of the Tree of Life "in the Paradiſe of God," is here evidently meant a participation of eternal life with God in heaven. Of this eternal life the faithful followers of their great leader are to be put in poſſeſſion, as the reward of their labours, when thoſe labours ſhall have been accompliſhed; when they ſhall have walked to the end of their journey in the path of Chriſt's commandments, and ſhall have finally overcome their ſpiritual enemies. May we not therefore, by parity of reaſon, infer from hence the ſignification and intent of the Tree of Life in Eden? By means of that ſacrament, had Adam gone happily through his probation, and

[b] Rev. xi. 7. [c] Rev. xxii. 14.

perſevered

perſevered in obedience unto the end, he would have been admitted, in the kingdom of heaven, to that ſtate of eternal life with God, for which he was always deſigned, and of which Paradiſe was the earthly reſemblance. He would have been removed from the ſhadows of this world to the realities of a better. His removal muſt have differed in the manner of it, from that of which we now live, or ought to live, in expectation. Without ſin, death could have had no power over him. He would have been tranſlated alive, as Enoch and Elijah, for particular purpoſes, afterwards were. The change would have been wrought in him at once, as it was in them, and as it will be in thoſe who ſhall be found alive, at the coming of our Lord to judgment. DISC. III.

When tranſgreſſion had ſubjected Adam to a ſentence of condemnation, the caſe was altered. Glory and immortality could no longer be obtained upon the terms of the firſt covenant, now broken and void.

The

DISC. III. The very attempt became criminal. Man was to be put under a new covenant, and in a new courſe of trial. He was to ſuffer in the fleſh for ſin, and to pay the penalty of death. But, through the merits of a ſurety, that death was to be made the gate of immortality. By faith he was to acquire, upon the mediatorial plan, a freſh right or power to eat of the Tree of Life, and live for ever, after the reſurrection from the dead, with his propitiated and reconciled Maker. In mercy, therefore, he was excluded from the garden of Eden, and from the original ſymbol of that eternal life, which was now to be ſought after by other means, and repreſented by other ſacraments. He was ſent forth into the world, to paſs his time in toil, pain, and ſorrow; in mourning, contrition, and penance; till death ſhould ſet him free, and introduce him to the joys purchaſed and prepared for him by that bleſſed perſon, "in whom is Life, and the Life is the "light of men[4]." The ſame divine per-

[4] John i. 4.

ſon

ſon was always the ſource of immortality, however the ſacred ſymbols, inſtituted to adumbrate it, have been varied under different diſpenſations. To our firſt parents, before the fall, he ſtood in the relation of Creator and Lord. To them, and to their poſterity, ſince that ſad cataſtrophe, he hath ſtood, and ever continueth to ſtand, in the new relation of Saviour and Redeemer. The man who doth not now acknowledge him in this latter character, will find him, in the former, an avenger to execute wrath: and that wrath can be ſo fierce and terrible, as that of the lamb? It is oil ſet on fire. The ſinner, unleſs he be in love with condemnation, muſt not revert to the firſt covenant, and aim at the acquiſition of eternal life, on the foot of the law of works, or the performance of unſinning obedience. In this caſe the rebel claims promotion, inſtead of ſuing for pardon. He puts forth his hand to the fruit of the now forbidden tree, which is no longer food for man. It's nature is changed, with our condition. To the eye of

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of human pride it ſtill looks fair and tempting; but it's contents, when eaten, are aſhes and ſulphur; and immortality, without redemption, would prove the reverſe of a bleſſing.

Such being the ſtate of this matter, and the order of the divine œconomy concerning it, all that is ſaid in the Scriptures from the fall downward, with regard to the new method of obtaining eternal life, and the appointed means of ſo doing, will throw light backward, and ſerve to illuſtrate the account already given of the Tree of Life in Paradiſe.

To this end may be adduced the texts, which ſpeak of the Redeemer, his religion, truth, grace, and ſalvation, under the very original expreſſion of the Tree of Life.

And here, the firſt place is due to that charming deſcription, left us by king Solomon, in the Proverbs, of divine WISDOM perſonified, and repreſented as having been with

with God in the beginning, yet rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and delighting to be with the ſons of men; as the way, the light, and the life, the author and giver of peace and comfort, joy and gladneſs; the Creator of all things, by whom the worlds were made, and without whom was not any thing made, that was made.—"Happy"—ſays the great teacher of Iſrael—"Happy is the man that findeth "Wiſdom, and the man that getteth under- "ſtanding. For the merchandiſe of it is better "than the merchandiſe of ſilver, and the gain "thereof than fine gold. She is more precious "than rubies, and all the things thou canſt de- "ſire are not to be compared unto her. Length "of days is in her right hand, and in her left "hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways "of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. "She is a tree of Life to them that lay hold "upon her, and happy is every one that re- "taineth her[a]."

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Thus, in another place—"The fruit of the "righteous is a Tree of Life; and he that

[a] Prov. iii. 13, &c.

DISC. III. " winneth ſouls is wiſe[t]." The fruit produced by the righteous, through grace, copious, fair, and well flavoured, like that which once grew upon the Tree of Life, invites all beholders to come and partake, with it's owner, of that glory and immortality with which it ſhall one day be crowned. And ſurely he, who, by theſe means, winneth ſouls to righteouſneſs and ſalvation, is wiſe indeed! He reſembles the eternal Wiſdom, the Son of God himſelf, who came down from heaven to win ſouls, when the fruit of the righteous was the true Tree of Life.

Again——" A wholeſome, or healing tongue " is a Tree of Life; but perverſeneſs therein is " a breach of the ſpirit[u]."

If this be ſo in what paſſes about the affairs of the preſent world, how much more, when the concerns of another make the ſubject of converſation! When we extend the Proverb to them, we cannot but think of the two capi-

[t] Prov. xi. 30. [u] Prov. xv. 4.

tal

tal inſtances, in which it was moſt ſignally verified. We deteſt the tongue that "perverted" mankind from the path of Life, and made a "breach in the ſpirit," at which ſin entered, and death by ſin. But everlaſting benediction be upon that tongue which ſpake, as no other ever did, or could ſpeak, pardon, peace, and comfort to loſt mankind. That was the Tree of Life, whoſe leaves were for the *healing* of the nations. "With the *tongue* "confeſſion is made unto *ſalvation.*" DISC. III.

Once more. "Hope deferred maketh the "Heart ſick; but when the deſire cometh, it "is a Tree of Life[b]." This likewiſe is true, in temporals, of any object long wiſhed for, and at laſt poſſeſſed; but it is emphatically ſo of the hope of ſalvation, which, while it is deferred, maketh the heart ſick; as we may find by the pathetic and forcible exclamations of thoſe who waited for it in old time. But when the deſire, that is, the object of the deſire—he whom ſo many prophets and

[b] Prov. xiii. 12.

DISC. III. kings had earneſtly deſired to ſee—he who was "the deſire of all nations"—when he came, he proved the Tree of Life reſtored in the Paradiſe of God.

Two remarkable repreſentations of things ſpiritual and divine under the Goſpel diſpenſation, or in the kingdom of heaven, were exhibited to Ezekiel and St. John. Let us compare them with each other, and both of them with the original ſcenery in Paradiſe, from which the images are evidently borrowed, and to which unleſs they are again referred, they loſe half their beauty and ſignificancy.

In Ezekiel's viſion of the Chriſtian church, under the figure of the ſecond temple, he tells us, he ſaw "waters iſſuing from the ſanctuary, and giving univerſal life, wherever "they went[i]." St. John ſaw "a river of "water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding "from the throne of God and the lamb[k]." And "a river," we know, "went forth" at

[i] Ezek. xlvii. 1, 9. [k] Rev. xxii. 1.

the

the beginning, "to water and make glad the "Garden of God, in Eden." DISC. III.

"On the banks of the river, on this ſide, "and on that ſide," Ezekiel beheld "very "many trees;" or as it ſhould, perhaps, be rendered, "a very great tree[l]," "whoſe leaf "ſhall not fade, neither ſhall the fruit thereof "be conſumed: it (in the ſingular number) "ſhall bring forth new fruit according to it's "months; and the fruit thereof ſhall be for "meat, and the leaves for medicine[m]." Let us now turn again to St. John—"In the midſt "of the ſtreet of it"—the new Jeruſalem, ſucceeding in the place of Paradiſe, and the old Jeruſalem, with it's temple and ſervices—"in the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and of either "ſide the river, was there the Tree of Life, "which bare twelve manner of fruit, and "yielded it's fruit every month; and the leaves "of the Tree were for the healing of the na-"tions[n]." Can we read either of theſe de-

[l] עץ רב מאד. [m] Ezek. xlvii. 12.

[n] Rev. xxii. 2.

DISC. III. ſcriptions, without immediately carrying our thoughts back to Eden, where we ſee growing out of the ground, at the command of the Lord God, "every tree good for food, and "pleaſant to the ſight, the Tree of Life alſo in "the midſt of the garden."

But let us take a view of ſome other figures and ſacraments, ordained ſince the fall of man, as the Tree of Life was appointed before it, to repreſent to the faithful the bleſſing of immortality.

The loſt bleſſing was to be recovered and reſtored to the human race by the ſufferings and death of a ſurety, who, after dying for our ſins, was to riſe again for our juſtification. The grand inſtitution, therefore, of this kind, commencing immediately upon the fall, and continuing in force to the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, was ſacrifice. A victim was brought to the altar, and being ſlain as a ſubſtitute for the offerer, firſt ſaved him from death, and then became food to ſupport his life. And as Providence hath been ever careful to furniſh us with continual memento's of the truths

truths moſt important and intereſting to us, it ſeems to be a circumſtance worthy notice, that ſince the uſe of animals for food, and thoſe chiefly which were made choice of in ſacrifice, the world ſubſiſteth by ſhedding of blood, and the death of the innocent is daily the life of the guilty. This is an additional reaſon why every meal ſhould be "ſanctified," according to the apoſtolical direction, "by the word of "God, and by prayer[o]," while the meat that periſheth reminds us, in ſo lively and ſtriking a manner, of that which endureth unto eternal life. The hiſtory of the Paſchal Lamb, with the preſervation of Iſrael from the hand of the Deſtroyer, in that night to be remembered through all their generations, the night of their leaving Egypt, is a very particular, full, and beautiful exemplification of the nature and deſign of ſacrifice. "Chriſt, our "Paſſover, is ſacrificed for us;" and therefore we "too keep the feaſt[p]." DISC. III.

That miraculous ſupply of food, vouchſafed by God, to ſuſtain his people, during their

[o] 1 Tim. iv. 5. [p] 1 Cor. v. 7.

DISC. III.

journey through the wilderneſs, till they came to the borders of Canaan, was another ſign or ſymbol of immortal life, and it's ſupport derived from above. This new and extraordinary viand ſprung not out of the earth, but came down, in rain, or dew, from heaven, white to the eye, ſweet to the taſte, and agreeable to every palate; given freely to all; proportioned to the neceſſities of each; and renewed day by day, till the ſojournings of Iſrael were over, and the promiſed reſt attained. St. Paul, having occaſion to ſpeak of thoſe events, which, as he expreſſes it, "happened "unto Iſrael for enſamples[q]," as figures or ſhadows of things ſpiritual and divine, mentions this miracle, with that of the water brought out of the rock, in the following terms— "They all did eat the ſame ſpiritual meat; they "did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink; for "they drank of that ſpiritual rock, which fol- "lowed them; and that rock was Chriſt[r]." Our Lord, in the ſixth chapter of St. John's Goſpel, diſcourſing with the Jews upon this ſubject, ſays to them—"Moſes gave you not

[q] Τυποι συνεβαινον [r] 1 Cor. x. 3, &c.

"that

"that bread from heaven; but my father giv-
"eth you the TRUE bread from heaven. For
"the bread of God is he that cometh down
"from heaven, and giveth life unto the
"world[t]." Christ here styleth himself the TRUE bread, plainly in opposition to that which was shadowy and figurative. He is the TRUE bread, which cometh down from heaven, and is given, day by day, to nourish and support the Israel of God, the camp of the saints, the church militant, during *her* pilgrimage in the world, till she shall come to the promised inheritance, the land of that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the people of God. There we shall find, and enjoy for ever, the truth and substance of this sacred figure. "He that hath an ear, let him hear
"what the Spirit saith to the churches. To
"him that overcometh will I give to eat of the
"HIDDEN MANNA[u]," that is, to partake of that "life," which is "hid with Christ in God;" as the golden vessel of Manna was laid up, for a memorial, in "the holy places made with hands[x]."

[t] John vi. 32. [x] Rev. ii. 17.

[u] Exod. xvi. 33. Heb. ix. 4.

To

DISC. III. To the ſame purpoſe ſerved that bread, called the *Shew Bread*, or *Bread of the Preſence**, ſet forth new, every morning, in the tabernacle and temple, and denoting the ſuſtenance to be communicated to the ſouls of men from the body of the Meſſiah; to prefigure which body, it is well known, that both tabernacle and temple were conſtructed, under the direction of God himſelf.

Laſtly—What the Tree of Life was to Adam in Paradiſe; what Sacrifice in general was to the faithful, after the fall, from Abel downward; what the Paſchal Lamb was to Iſrael quitting Egypt; what Manna was to that people in the wilderneſs; what the Shew Bread was in the tabernacle and temple; all this, and if there be any other ſymbol of like import, it is now briefly comprehended, during the continuance of the Chriſtian church upon earth, in the holy Eucharist. The former were prefigurative ſacraments, this is a commemorative one. They ſhewed forth the Meſſiah,

* לחם פנים.

and

and the life which is by him, until his first coming; this shews forth the same Messiah, and the same life, "until his coming again." Excluded from the Tree of Life in Paradise, we are admitted to partake of the Bread of Life in the church. Lost by the covenant of Works, we are saved by that of Grace. A cheering voice calls to us from the sanctuary, "Draw "near with faith, and take this holy sacrament "to your comfort." The elements are honoured with the names of the Body and Blood of Christ, because appointed to signify and convey, to the worthy communicant, the blessings purchased by his Body broken, and his Blood shed, upon the cross; blessings to the soul, like the benefits conferred upon the body by bread and wine; life, health, strength, comfort, and joy. DISC. III.

Such have been the different symbols and sacraments vouchsafed to mankind under different dispensations, all representing and shadowing out a glorious immortality in another and better world, where we shall sit down with the author and giver of it, at his table, to eat Bread, and drink of the

DISC. III. the fruit of the Vine, new in his kingdom; where we ſhall give glory to the Lamb that was ſlain; where we ſhall partake of the hidden Manna, and eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God.

From the paſſages of Scripture thus laid together, the nature and deſign of the Tree of Life in Eden ſeem ſufficiently clear. And, upon a review of what hath been ſaid, it is impoſſible not to admire the conſiſtency and uniformity running through both Teſtaments, from the ſecond chapter of the Geneſis of Moſes, to the twenty-ſecond of St. John's Revelation, which ſo mutually illuſtrate and explain each other. The analogy of faith, in this inſtance, proclaims aloud the wiſdom and harmony of the divine diſpenſations, from the creation to the conſummation of all things.

At ſundry times, in divers manners, and by various inſtruments, hath Heaven conveyed inſtruction to man. But the inſtruction

tion conveyed, with the terms and figures employed to convey it, beſpeak, at all times, the hand of the ſame omniſcient and beneficent Author. They muſt be conſtrued and expounded upon the ſame plan; and, when rightly conſtrued and expounded, will be found to terminate in the ſame awful and intereſting objects, eternal life, and the means of it's attainment. To theſe great ends ſerve the ſymbols of Paradiſe, the ſacrifices of the patriarchs, the types of the law, the viſions of the prophets, and the ſacraments of the Goſpel, with the numberleſs expreſſions and deſcriptions borrowed from them, and referring to them. Theſe conſtitute a kind of *ſacred language* peculiar to holy writ, and only explicable by it. The knowledge of this language is a ſcience by itſelf, and the ſtudy of it, well worthy the attention of ſuch as have leiſure and abilities to proſecute it, it's own rich and exceeding great reward. The ſubjects are of ſuch infinite moment, that all others muſt, in compariſon, appear to be as nothing. And the dreſs, in which they are preſented to us, is the moſt ornamental and engaging

in

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in the world. It is of that kind, to which both eloquence and poetry, among men, owe all their charms. The doctrines of Scripture are not propoſed in a naked logical form, but arrayed in the moſt beautiful and ſtriking images which the creation affords*.

A celebrated and well known author, whoſe eſſays have long been the eſtabliſhed ſtandard of true taſte and fine writing, makes, in one of them, the following obſervations —" By ſimilitudes drawn from the viſible " parts of nature, a truth in the underſtand- " ing is, as it were, reflected by the imagi- " nation: we are able to ſee ſomething " like colour and ſhape in a notion, and " to diſcover a ſcheme of thoughts traced " out upon matter. And here the mind " receives a great deal of ſatisfaction, and " has two of it's faculties gratified at the " ſame time, while the fancy is buſy in " copying after the underſtanding, and tran-

* See Ld. BACON's Advancement of Learning, b. vi. c. 3.

" ſcribing

" ſcribing ideas out of the intellectual world
" into the material. It is this talent of af-
" fecting the imagination that gives an
" embelliſhment to good ſenſe, and makes
" one man's compoſitions more agreeable
" than another's. It has ſomething in it
" like creation, and beſtows a kind of ex-
" iſtence. It makes additions to nature, and
" gives greater variety to God's works. In
" a word, it is able to beautify and adorn
" the moſt illuſtrious ſcenes in the univerſe,
" and to fill the mind with more glorious
" ſhews and apparitions than can be found in
" any part of it[7]."

Perhaps it is impoſſible any where to meet with juſter ſentiments than theſe are, clothed in more apt and elegant expreſſions. And this ſingle paſſage would have ſufficed to eſtabliſh the reputation ſo juſtly acquired by it's author. The inference I would beg leave to make from it is this: If ſuch be the caſe in human compoſitions, where ſimilitudes

[7] Mr. ADDISON's concluding paper on the Pleaſures of the Imagination. Spectator, vi. N° 421.

are

1756. are drawn by ſhort-ſighted man, to illuſtrate
111. things temporal; what muſt it be, when they are drawn, to illuſtrate things eternal, by him, who has a perfect knowledge of the nature and properties of the objects from whence they are drawn, as well as of thoſe to which they are applied; nay, who, doubtleſs created the viſible world, among other purpoſes, for that, to which he himſelf, in his Revelations to mankind, has ſo continually employed it, that of ſerving as a picture, or repreſentation of the world at preſent inviſible? "Eye hath not ſeen," ſays an Apoſtle, "nor ear heard, neither hath it entered "into the heart of man to conceive the "things that God hath prepared for them "that love him. But God hath revealed "them unto us by his Spirit;" and the Spirit, knowing our infirmities, and whereof we are made, hath revealed them, from the beginning, by external ſigns, ſymbols, ſacraments, and a figurative language, ſupplied by them. Upon this very principle it is, that

[a] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

another

another acknowleged maſter of ſtyle and compoſition grounds the character of the ſacred writings, conſidered in that view—"Eloquence (ſays he) is that which perſuades: it perſuades by moving; it moves by things, and palpable ideas only: and hence no eloquence is ſo perfect as that of the Scriptures; ſince the moſt ſpiritual and metaphyſical things are there repreſented by ſenſible and lively images[1]." DISC. III.

In juſtification of this remark, let the appeal, in the inſtance now before us, be made to every one endued with ſenſibility. The poſition to be laid down is, that, through the alone merits of the Redeemer, we now

[1] ROLLIN, Belles Lettres, ii. 360.—"To quarrel with our Maker about this way of proceeding, would be to blame him for conveying truths to us in the moſt affecting and agreeable manner; or for creating us with thoſe faculties, which are fitted to receive truths, thus conveyed. For the moſt important truths, as we are framed at preſent, can make but a slight impreſſion on the mind, unleſs they enter firſt, like a picture, into the imagination, and from thence are ſtamped on the memory." PETERS, Crit. Diſſ. on the Book of Job, Part 1. Sect. x.

DISC. III. inherit eternal life. Is it poſſible for all the art of man to convey this truth in terms ſo pleaſing and informing, as thoſe few uſed by St. John, with alluſion to the ſcenery in Eden? —"And he ſhewed me a pure river of water "of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of "the throne of God, and of the Lamb. "And in the midſt of the ſtreet of the new "Jeruſalem, and of either ſide of the river, "was there the Tree of Life, which bare "twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her "fruit every month; and the leaves of the "Tree were for the healing of the nations."—

To whom, then, bleſſed Lord Jeſus, ſhould we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life. Thou art the true Tree of Life, in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God. For us men and for ſalvation, thou didſt condeſcend to be planted, in a lowly form, upon the earth. But thy head ſoon reached to heaven, and thy branches to the ends of the earth. Thy head is crowned with glory, and thy branches are the branches of honour and grace. Medicinal are thy leaves to heal every malady, and thy fruits are all the bleſſings of immortality.

tality. It is our hope, our ſupport, our comfort, and all our joy, to reflect, that, wearied with the labours, and worn out with the cares and ſorrows of a fallen world, we ſhall ſit down under thy ſhadow with great delight, and thy fruit ſhall be ſweet to our taſte! DISC. III.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE TREE OF KNOWLEGE.

GENESIS II. 17.

Of the Tree of Knowlege of good and evil thou ſhalt not eat.

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THIS is the firſt and the only law recorded to have been promulged in the ſtate of man's innocence. It may therefore be reaſonably ſuppoſed to have contained in itſelf the ſubſtance of many other laws. It's comprehenſion may be inferred likewiſe from it's importance. The tranſgreſſion of it occaſioned the fall of the human race, and introduced the neceſſity of a redemption by the Son of God.

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Could we aſcertain with preciſion what is intended by *the knowledge of good and evil*, ſuch a diſcovery might poſſibly furniſh us with a key to this part of Scripture, and to the tranſactions relative to the trial of our firſt parents in Paradiſe. Let us therefore begin with an enquiry into the true meaning of theſe words.

By the knowlege of good and evil the generality of commentators underſtand *experimental* knowlege; and they ſuppoſe the name to have been given to the tree by a *prolepſis*, becauſe, in the event, through man's tranſgreſſion, it was to become the means of his attaining the experimental knowledge of evil; thus purchaſing to himſelf a knowledge of good, manifeſted and illuſtrated by compariſon with it's oppoſite; as a perſon is then ſaid to underſtand the nature and value of health, when he has been deprived of it by ſickneſs.

That ſuch was the effect of the tranſgreſſion is certain: but it is not, perhaps, ſo certain, that

that this is the right interpretation of the phraſe, which is by no means peculiar to this place, but occurs in other parts of the ſacred writings, where it cannot be taken in the ſenſe aſſigned. Nay, there are two paſſages even in the third chapter of Geneſis itſelf, which do not admit of ſuch expoſition. The tempter aſſures the woman, that, on eating the fruit, they ſhould be as gods, "knowing good and "evil." And the Almighty afterwards ſays, "Man is become like one of us, *knowing* "*good and evil.*" Now the knowlege of good and evil poſſeſſed by the Deity cannot poſſibly be that produced by the experimental knowledge of evil. Let us examine into the uſage of the words elſewhere. DISC. IV.

In Deuteronomy we read—"Moreover your "little ones which ye ſaid ſhould be a prey, "and your children which in that day had "no *knowlege of good and evil*, they ſhall "go in thither[a]." Here, to know good and evil is, evidently, to know the nature of both,

[a] Deut. i. 39.

DISC. IV. and ſo to form a judgment upon that knowlege, as to chooſe the one, and refuſe the other. Thus again the ſame ſentiment is expreſſed in the well-known paſſage of Iſaiah, "Before the child ſhall know to *refuſe the* "*evil and chooſe the good*[b]." And again, the woman of Tekoah ſays to David, "As an "angel of God, ſo is my lord the king to "*diſcern good and bad*[c]," that is, to diſtinguiſh, judge, and act accordingly. This laſt paſſage is ſimilar to thoſe before cited from Geneſis and muſt explain them; namely, "Ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and "evil;" and, "Man is become like one of "us, to know good and evil." It may be added, that a New Teſtament writer uſes the words in the very ſame ſenſe. For the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of adults in Chriſtianity, as oppoſed to babes in the faith, ſtyles them ſuch as have "their ſenſes exerciſed to *diſcern good and* "*evil*[d]."

Such being the plain and acknowleged import of the expreſſion in other parts of the

[b] Iſai. vii. 16. [c] 2 Sam. xiv. 17.
[d] Heb. v. 14.

Scriptures,

Scriptures, why ſhould we ſuppoſe it to be different in the inſtance before us? Let us rather conclude it to be the ſame. DISC. IV.

The queſtion then will be, how could this Tree in the Garden of Eden confer a knowlege of good and evil? How could it enable man to diſcern the nature of each? How could it inform him which was to be purſued, and which to be avoided?

Shall we ſay, with the Jewiſh writers, that there was any virtue in the fruit, to clarify the underſtanding, and ſo to teach man knowlege? But if ſo, why was it prohibited? For the knowlege, which we ſuppoſe to be implied in the phraſe, is perfective of man's nature; it is true wiſdom; and if he really acquired it by taſting the forbidden fruit, he was much benefited by tranſgreſſion. We muſt therefore determine, that the Tree was deſigned to teach the knowlege of good and evil, or to be productive of true wiſdom, not in a phyſical but in a moral way. It inſtructed our firſt parents to fly from and avoid death, and the cauſe of death, which muſt have

DISC. IV. have been in ſome manner denoted by this Tree; as they were directed to chooſe life, and the cauſe of life, ſignified to them by the other Tree, which bore that appellation.

The prohibition, being calculated for man's trial, was at the ſame time calculated to give him the information neceſſary for that purpoſe. Such is the nature and deſign of every law. It conveys the knowlege of good and evil by prohibiting the latter, and conſequently enjoining the former. "By the law," ſays St. Paul, "is the knowlege of ſin. I had not "known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou "ſhalt not covet[a]." It is the law, in every caſe reſpectively, which gives the knowlege of good and evil. Obedience to it is good, and the reward is life; diſobedience is evil, and the penalty death. And the trial of man, thus informed, is, whether he will obey or diſobey; in order to the manifeſtation of the lawgiver's juſtice, wiſdom, power, and glory, by rewarding or puniſhing him, as he does the one or the other. The difficulty lies here:

[a] Rom. vii. 7.

Why

Why an action to appearance ſo unimportant and inſignificant as that of eating or forbearing to eat the fruit of a Tree, ſhould have been appointed as the teſt of his obedience? DISC. IV.

To ſolve this difficulty, let it be conſidered, that, beſide thoſe laws uſually termed *moral*, and ſuppoſed to ſpeak their own fitneſs and propriety, from an obvious view of the nature and conſtitution of things, it is not ſtrange or uncommon for God to try the love and obedience of man by other precepts, ſtyled *poſitive* and *ceremonial*. Such was the order for Abraham to quit his country and kindred, and afterward to offer his ſon Iſaac: upon which latter occaſion, notwithſtanding the proofs before given by him of an obedient ſpirit, God was pleaſed to ſay, "Now I know thou fear-"eſt God[t]." Such were the ritual obſervances regarding ſacrificature and other particulars, obſerved among the patriarchs, and afterwards, with additions, republiſhed in form by Moſes. Such are the injunctions to abſtinence and ſelf-denial, with the inſtitutions of

[t] Gen. xxii. 12.

Baptiſm

DISC. IV. Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, among Chriſtians. What hath been thus done under every other diſpenſation, was done likewiſe in Paradiſe.

And as touching theſe ſame precepts called *poſitive*, even they are not, what they are ſometime deemed to be, arbitrary precepts, given for no other reaſon, but becauſe it is the will of God to give them. They carry in them a reaſon, which, though it may not be diſcoverable unleſs revealed, is yet nevertheleſs founded on the ſtate of human nature, it's relation to God, and it's various wants, at different times, and in different ſituations. The obſervation, indeed, made by an eminent caſuiſt[a] with reſpect to human laws, holds much ſtronger with reſpect to laws divine. "The "obedience of that man is much too delicate, "who inſiſts upon knowing the reaſons of "all laws before he will obey them. The "legiſlator muſt be ſuppoſed to have given "his ſanction from the reaſon of the thing; "but where we cannot diſcover the reaſon of

[a] Biſhop Taylor.

"it,

" it, the ſanction is to be the only reaſon of " our obedience." This obſervation, I ſay, is moſt certainly a juſt one. But as a wiſe God acts not without the higheſt reaſon, ſo a gracious God, in his diſpenſations to his reaſonable creatures, has, in many inſtances, with his commands, communicated the reaſons on which they were founded, and has even condeſcended to argue with his people, on the juſtice and rectitude of his proceedings. DISC. IV.

Services outward and viſible have been enjoined. They have always been enjoined. But then they have always been ſymbolical of diſpoſitions and actions inward and ſpiritual. When this is the caſe, from unimportant and inſignificant, they become the moſt important and ſignificant tranſactions in the world. An uninformed perſon, living in the times of perſecution under the heathen emperors, muſt have been, to the laſt degree, aſtoniſhed and confounded, when told, that a Chriſtian was in danger of eternal rejection from the preſence of God, if he ſcattered a handful of incenſe on the fire; and that he was bound, by his religion,

rather

Disc. IV. rather to die in torments, than ſubmit to do it. But every objection vaniſhes in a moment when we know that ſuch an action, in a Chriſtian ſo circumſtanced, was a token of renouncing his God and Saviour, and acknowleging a falſe object of worſhip.

To come a little nearer to the point in queſtion. Know we not, that the action of *eating*, in particular, from the beginning, both among believers and unbelievers, has ever been eſteemed and conſtituted an action ſymbolical of religious affection; and that, in the days of St. Paul, a man denominated himſelf either one or the other, as he partook of the Lord's table, or the table of an idol? What were theſe, in the new Paradiſe, the church Chriſtian, but the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death? Why ſhould it ſeem incredible, or abſurd, that, in man's original trial, the ſame action ſhould have been, in ſome manner, ſignificative of the ſame affection? And if in that truly golden age of innocence, health, and felicity, the food allotted to man was of the vegetable kind, then the fruit of a *Tree* muſt of courſe be the ſubject of the prohibition.

In

In after ages, under the law of Moſes and the permiſſion of animal food, the figurative ſyſtem of rites was artificial and ſanguinary; but in the ſacred grove of Eden, that firſt tabernacle or temple, planted for a place of worſhip as well as of abode, the whole of the religious ſcenery was compoſed of the beautiful and luxuriant productions of primeval nature, unſtained with blood, when as yet there was no malediction upon the ground. DISC. IV.

This conſideration ſatisfies the mind, and removes every objection made to the nature of the teſt, and the wiſdom of God in appointing it. For if in this, as in other diſpenſations, the action of eating was intended to be ſymbolical of ſome mental diſpoſition or affection, whether we can now aſcertain particulars, or not, all the buffoonery of infidelity falls to the ground at once. The trial of Adam, like that of every other man, was, whether he would ſo far believe in God, as to look for happineſs in obedience to the divine command; or would ſeek that happineſs elſewhere, and apply for it to ſome forbidden object, of which the

DISC. IV. the Tree muſt have been an emblematical repreſentation.

You will aſk, what that object was? and what information, as to the knowlege of good and evil, Adam could receive from the prohibition? By anſwering the laſt queſtion, a way may, in ſome meaſure perhaps, be opened, for an anſwer to the firſt.

A due contemplation of the prohibition might naturally ſuggeſt to the mind of our firſt parent the following important truths; eſpecially if we conſider (as we muſt and ought to conſider) that to him, under the tuition of his Maker, all things neceſſary were explained and made clear, how obſcure ſoever they may appear to us, forming a judgment of them from a very conciſe narrative, couched in figurative language, at this diſtance of time.

Looking upon the Tree of Knowlege, then, and recollecting the precept of which it was the ſubject, Adam might learn that God was the ſovereign Lord of all things: that the dominion

minion veſted in man over the creatures was by no means a dominion abſolute and independent: that without and beſide God, there was no true and real good: that to deſire any thing without and beſide him, was evil: that no temporal worldly good, however fair and tempting it's appearance, was to be fixed upon by man, as the ſource of his felicity: that the ſole rule for ſhunning, or deſiring things ſenſible, ſhould be the will and word of God; and that good and evil ſhould be judged of by that ſtandard alone: that the obedience, which God would accept, muſt be paid with all the powers and affections of the mind, ſhewing itſelf careful and prompt in every the leaſt inſtance: that man was not yet placed in a ſtate of conſummate and eſtabliſhed bliſs; but that ſuch ſtate was by him to be earneſtly expected, and inceſſantly deſired; and that he muſt take the way to it, marked and pointed out by God himſelf[h].

Theſe particulars ſeem to flow from the

[h] See VITRINGA, *Obſervat. Sacr.* vol. ii. lib. iv. cap. 12, from whom many of the ſentiments in this Diſcourſe are borrowed.

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prohibition in an eaſy and natural train. And they lead us to anſwer the other queſtion, namely, What was the object repreſented by the Tree of Knowlege? It was that object, on which man is prone to ſet his affections, inſtead of placing them on a better; it was that object, which, in every age, has been the great rival of the Almighty in the human heart; it was that object, which, in one way or other, has always been "worſhipped and ſerved rather "than the Creator;" it was the CREATURE, the WORLD; and the grand trial was, as it ever hath been, and ever will be, till the world ſhall ceaſe to exiſt, whether things viſible, or things inviſible, ſhould obtain the preference; whether man ſhould walk "by ſight, "or by faith." To know this, was the knowlege of good and evil; and this knowlege came by the law of God, which ſaid, "Thou "ſhalt not covet[1]." Man's wiſdom conſiſted in the obſervation of that law; but an enemy perſuaded him to ſeek wiſdom by tranſgreſſing it. He did ſo; and had nothing left, but to repent of his folly: a caſe that happens, among his deſcendants, every day, and every hour.

[1] Ουκ επιθυμησεις.

Let

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Let us, therefore, conſider the Tree of Knowlege, in this light, with reſpect to it's nature, ſituation, deſign, qualities, effects, and the knowlege conferred by it.

The fruit of this Tree was, to appearance, fair and pleaſant; but, when taſted, it became, by the divine appointment, the cauſe of death. Now, what is it, which, in the eyes of all mankind, ſeems equally pleaſing and alluring, but the end thereof, when coveted in oppoſition to the divine command, proves to be death? It is the World, with it's pleaſures and it's glories, deſired by it's votaries, *per fas atque nefas*, to the denial of God, and to their own deſtruction. The Scriptures proclaim this aloud, and the experience of all generations confirms their teſtimony. Indeed, what is there in the univerſe, but the Creator, and the Creature? And between whom, but them, can the conteſt ſubſiſt, for the love and obedience of man?

The Tree of Knowlege was ſituated in the midſt of the garden, as was the Tree of

DISC. IV.

Life. They ſtood near together, but they ſtood in oppoſition. The divine diſpenſations are always beſt illuſtrated by each other. Under the Goſpel, Jeſus Chriſt is the Tree of Life. What is it that oppoſes him, and notwithſtanding all that he has done, and ſuffered, and commanded, and promiſed, and threatened, is continually, by it's ſolicitations, being ever preſent and at hand, ſeducing men into the path of death? Scripture and experience again join in aſſuring us, that it is the World. When we are in the houſe of God, which is Eden reſtored, engaged in hearing his word, and in the exerciſes of devotion, we ſit down, as it were, under the ſhadow of the Tree of Life. No ſooner are we gone from it, and too often even while we are there, the World intrudes, and draws off to other ſubjects our thoughts and our affections. What ſaith Moſes under the law? "Behold I "ſet before you, this day, life and good, death "and evil; chooſe ye [k]." Are not theſe the two Trees of Paradiſe? But imagination cannot form to itſelf a more exquiſite and affecting

[k] Deut. xxx. 15.

piece

piece of ſcenery upon this ſubject, than that exhibited by king Solomon in the book of Proverbs; a book whoſe end and deſign is, to teach us the true knowlege of good and evil, that we may purſue the one, and avoid the other. In his viith chapter, under the uſual figure of a harlot, looſely decked in a profuſion of vain ornaments, he introduces the World, or the falſe wiſdom thereof, by it's ſeveral fictitious charms, and meretricious blandiſhments, alluring the unwary to the chambers of deſtruction. In the ſucceeding chapter, by way of perfect contraſt, appears, in the beauty and majeſty of holineſs, the offspring of the Almighty, the Son of the Father, the true and eternal Wiſdom of God, with all the tender love and affectionate concern of a parent, inviting men to the ſubſtantial joys and unfading pleaſures of immortality, in the houſe of ſalvation. Again, we are preſented with the Tree of Death, and the Tree of Life. From Solomon let us paſs to St. Paul. "To be carnally "minded is death; but to be ſpiritually "minded is life. If ye live after the fleſh, ye "ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do

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"mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live[1]." Behold once more the Trees of Death and Life. Such, in good truth, is the face of things every where offering itſelf to view; ſuch is the conteſt inceſſantly carrying on in this preſent World, which, on the one hand, entices the children of Adam, by giving themſelves up to it's enjoyments, to taſte the Tree of Death; while the Redeemer, on the other, ſtill continues to cry aloud by his word, "To "him that overcometh will I give to eat of "the Tree of Life."

The Tree of Knowlege was deſigned to be the teſt of Adam's obedience, the ſubject matter of his trial. The World, with it's deſirable objects, is the teſt of our obedience, the ſubject matter of our trial, whether we will make it our chief good, or prefer the promiſe of God to it. Thus the trial of Abraham was, whether he would quit his country and kindred, and yield up his only ſon in obedience to the divine command, truſting to a recom-

[1] Rom. viii. 6, 13

pence

pence in reverſion. The trial of Job was, whether he would ſtill ſerve God, when deprived of his poſſeſſions, his family, and his health. After this ſort was our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf proved by the moſt powerful incitements of the human paſſions. Of the Tree of Knowlege Satan tempted him to put forth his hand and take and eat, that the ſecond Adam might be tried after the example of the firſt. The diſciples alſo are tried in like manner with their bleſſed maſter. They are inſtructed to renounce the World, and to deny themſelves: which is only the original prohibition in other words: "Of the "Tree of the Knowlege of good and evil thou "ſhalt not eat." DISC. IV.

The apparent qualities of the forbidden tree are repreſented to have been theſe: It ſeemed "good for food, and fair to the ſight, and a "tree to be deſired to make one wiſe." It is remarkable, that St. John, laying before us an inventory of the world, and all that is in it, employs a diviſion entirely ſimilar. "Love "not the world," ſays he, "neither the things

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"that are in the world. If any man love the "world, the love of the Father is not in him. "For all that is in the world, the desire of the "flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the "pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of "the world. And the world passeth away, "and the desire thereof; but he that doth the "will of God abideth for ever[m]." Here is a picture of the fatal Tree, full blown, with all it's temptations about it, drawn, by the pencil of truth, in it's original and proper colours. The expressions tally, to the minutest degree of exactness. The "desire of the flesh" answers to "good for food;" the "desire of the eyes" is parallel with "fair to the sight;" and the "pride of life" corresponds with "a Tree to "be desired to make one wise." The opposition between this Tree and the other is strongly marked. "If any man love the "World, the love of the Father is not in "him." And we are informed, that one leads to death, the other to life. "The world pass-"eth away, and the desire thereof; but he

[m] 1 John ii. 15.

"that

"that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." DISC. IV.
Preciſely conformable, in every circumſtance, was the threefold temptation of the ſecond Adam. He was tempted to convert ſtones into bread for food, to ſatisfy "the deſires of "the fleſh;" he was tempted with the kingdoms of the world and the glories of them, to ſatisfy "the deſire of the eyes;" he was tempted to work a miracle on the pinnacle of the temple, and to ſhew himſelf moving aloft through the air in the ſight of the multitude, to diſplay "the pride of life." He repelled the tempter, as our firſt parents ſhould have done, and as we their children ſhould do now, inſtead of judging according to appearances, by a firm and reſolute appeal to the Revelation of God.

Thus, whether we conſider the Tree of Knowlege as to it's nature, it's ſituation, it's deſign, or it's qualities, it ſeems to have been a very apt and ſignificant emblem of the Creature, or the World, with it's delights and it's glories, the objects oppoſed, in every age, to God and his word. To reject the allurements

of

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of the former, and obey the dictates of the latter, is the knowlege of good and evil, and the true wisdom of man. So that the forbidden Tree in Paradise, when the divine intentions concerning it are explained from other parts of Scripture, teaches the important lesson more than once inculcated by Solomon, and which was likewise the result of holy Job's enquiries: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, "that is WISDOM; and to DEPART FROM "EVIL IS UNDERSTANDING."

Whoever shall attentively reflect on the evidence which has been produced, and duly consider the perfect coincidence and harmony of the Scriptures and dispensations of God upon the subject, will, perhaps, be convinced, that, in the main, we must have fixed upon the true exposition of "the knowlege of good "and evil," and the nature of man's original trial. There is a doubt, or difficulty, which offers itself, and may seem to require a solution. It is this. We all know, as the state of human affairs is at present, by what manner, and by what temptations, the world solicits

licits our desires after objects forbidden: but what temptation, you will say, could it hold forth to our first parents, existing alone, invested with sovereignty over it, and possessed of all it's pleasures, and it's glories, in the garden of Eden? This question will, perhaps, be best answered by asking one or two more. What temptation, then, let it be asked, could the world present to the people of God, when placed in the land of Promise, and blessed with every species of temporal felicity? What temptation can the world present to a pious Christian, placed by Providence in a state of affluence, and furnished with every good that his heart can wish for? The truth is, that the world, even supposing it to have been lawfully attained, and to be in ever so good hands, has *this* power of temptation; it may engage the attention of the human mind, and attract to itself the affections of the human heart, till, by degrees, it's Maker is forsaken and forgotten. It may induce a man to consider it as an abode, and no longer to desire a removal to higher and better things with God above. "Beware," says Moses, "lest when thou hast "eaten,

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"eaten, and art full, thine heart be lifted up, "and thou forget the Lord thy God[a]." This proved to be the caſe of the Iſraelites. It is the temptation too often fatal both to nations and individuals, when indulged by Heaven with ſucceſs and proſperity. And if the world, obſcured as it's brightneſs has been by the fall, can and does now produce ſuch an effect on the wiſeſt of thoſe that are at any time favored with a large ſhare of it, how much more muſt it have been able to charm, and to deceive, when firſt formed in perfect beauty! Conſidering this circumſtance, and withal, how "the Creature," in the earlieſt ages, was "wor-"ſhipped and ſerved, inſtead of the Creator," one is almoſt ready to think it poſſible, that Idolatry itſelf might take it's beginning in Eden.

From the ſad experience of thoſe who have gone before us, let us learn to have recourſe to the law of God, for our *knowlege of good and evil*, and to refrain from the fruit of the

[a] Deut. viii. 14.

forbidden

forbidden Tree, the Tree of Death. Of this fruit, though proceeding from the ſame root, there have been different kinds put forth and exhibited in different periods of time, agreeable to the turn and temper of each. In the days of the patriarchs, and of the Iſraelites, it was the worſhip of the material elements, or powers of nature, in the place of Him who made them, accompanied with every kind of impurity. Such was the religion of the revolted nations, and ſuch the rites with which it was celebrated. Yet ſuch a religion, and ſuch rites, the people of God, for many ages, notwithſtanding all that he did for them, and ſaid to them, ſtrange as it may appear to us at preſent, were ever ready to adopt and embrace. They apoſtatiſed to idolatry, with the divine glory blazing before their eyes, on the top of Sinai. Nor could the wiſeſt and greateſt of their princes afterwards eſcape the contagion. This corruption, which the Babyloniſh captivity, like a well applied cauſtic, ſerved to eat out, and to do away, was ſucceeded by a diſeaſe of another kind, but one that ſtuck to them, till it deſtroyed them; a miſtake

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miſtake as to the nature of their œconomy; a confidence in externals; a deep hypocriſy; a ſpirit wholly ſecularized; an ambition to have all the kingdoms of the world ſubject to Jeruſalem, and the wealth and glory of them centered there. "The deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eyes, and the pride of life," were choſen in oppoſition to the celeſtial fruits of love and obedience, humility and charity, faith and holineſs, produced among them by Jeſus Chriſt, the Tree of immortality. They "put forth the hand, and taſted." But ſoon the exterminating angel diſpoſſeſſed them of their Paradiſe, and they died the death.

Since the aſcenſion of Chriſt, the heathen world has been converted to the Goſpel, and that deſert has become the garden of the Lord. But in this garden alſo—is there no Tree of Death? no ſpecious fruit held forth to entice the unwiſe to perdition? What is the doctrine, which, in ſome parts of Chriſtendom, gives adoration to beings that are not God; or that, which, in others, denies it to Him who is ſo? What is the ſcheme, that

aſſerts

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aſſerts the non-neceſſity of a Divine Revelation, claiming to man the right, and attributing to him the power of making a religion for himſelf, and preſcribing to his Maker the terms of his own acceptance? What is the atheiſtical policy, which excludes the Creator from the care of his works, and his Providence from the kingdoms of the earth? What is that ſyſtem of paganiſm revived under the name and notion of *philoſophy*, as oppoſed to Chriſtianity, and every thing that is called Religion, by which either the Deity is materialized, or matter deified? What is that unbounded licentiouſneſs in principles and manners, daily growing more and more into vogue, and ſhameleſsly, by ſome of the new philoſophers, defended in form? What is the luxury, the ſplendor, the extravagance, the diſſipation, the abandoned profligacy, and ungodlineſs of the age?

Behold the flouriſhing ſtate of the fatal Tree! View the extent of it's branches, and the abundance of it's fruit, in these latter days! But remember, that, ſtill—the end is Death; to

DISC. IV. to a nation, exciſion; to individuals, without repentance and faith, deſtruction everlaſting from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he ſhall deſcend into his garden to make inquiſition, and call offenders to their final account. Be not ye therefore deceived and ſeduced, however the temptation may ſeem "fair to the ſight, and "good for food;" however "deſirable" it may be repreſented "to make you wiſe." Take your direction, through life, from the word of God, and be not prevailed upon to falſify and tranſgreſs it. The conflict may be ſharp, but it will be ſoon over; bear up reſolutely under it; and, for your conſolation and encouragement in the hour of trial, when ſtrongly ſolicited to taſte the Tree of Death, liſten to that ſtrength-conferring voice, which crieth from the eternal throne, in words that will bear a repetition—"To him that overcometh will I, "give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in "the midſt of the Paradiſe of God."

DIS-

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THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

ZECHARIAH IX. 9, 10.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; ſhout, O daughter of Jeruſalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly and riding upon an aſs, and upon a colt the foal of an aſs. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horſe from Jeruſalem, and the battle bow ſhall be cut off: and he ſhall ſpeak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion ſhall be from ſea even unto ſea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

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THIS prophecy was delivered by Zechariah, five hundred years before the advent of Chriſt. And St. Matthew, in the Goſpel appointed for this day, affirmeth it

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to have had it's accompliſhment when our Lord entered Jeruſalem, in the manner here deſcribed, amidſt the acclamations of the attending multitude. "All this was done, that "it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an aſs, and a colt "the foal of an aſs." The prediction is of the literal kind, and it was literally and most exactly fulfilled in Jeſus of Nazareth. No other King, with theſe characteriſtic marks about him ever thus came to Sion, before him; and ſince the Jews rejected him, they have loſt their temple, their city, and their country; nor has there been any Sion, to which their King might come. Jeruſalem would not rejoice, on the day when the prophet had enjoined her to rejoice, and therefore ſhe hath had cauſe to mourn from that day to this. The rulers of Sion were vexed and chagrined at beholding a ſcene, which ſhould have excited them to ſhout aloud for joy. The diſciples, indeed, exulted, and ſang Hoſannah to the Son of David. Could Meſſiah enter his capital unacknow-

knowleged? That was impoſſible. Had men been ſilent upon this occaſion, the buildings and pavements of the city muſt have ſupplied the defect, and borne their atteſtation to the promiſed and long expected king of Iſrael. "I tell you," replied our Lord to the Phariſees, who deſired him to rebuke his diſciples— "I tell you, that if theſe ſhould hold their "peace, the ſtones would immediately cry "out." DISC. V.

That we may perceive the full force and beauty of the prophecy before us, it will be neceſſary to ſhew it's connection with the preceding part of the chapter wherein it ſtands.

In this ix^th^ chapter of his prophecy, Zechariah denounceth ſome of the divine judgments, which were executed by that ſcourge of heaven, Alexander the Great, when he overran Syria, took Damaſcus, burnt Tyre, deſtroyed Gaza, and, in imitation of his favourite hero, dragged the governor thereof at his chariot wheels. "The burden of the word of the

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"Lord in the land of Hadrach, and Damaſcus "ſhall be the reſt thereof—And Hamath "alſo ſhall border thereby, Tyrus and Sidon, "though it be very wiſe. And Tyrus did "build herſelf a ſtrong hold, and heaped up "ſilver as the duſt, and fine gold as the mire "of the ſtreets. Behold, the Lord will caſt "her out, and he will ſmite her power in the "ſea, and ſhe ſhall be devoured with fire. "Aſkelon ſhall ſee it and fear; Gaza alſo ſhall "ſee it, and ſhall be very ſorrowful; and "Ekron, for her expectation ſhall be aſhamed, "and the king ſhall periſh from Gaza, and "Aſkelon ſhall not be inhabited." The prophet next foretelleth the mixture and incorporation of the Philiſtines, when thus humbled by Alexander, with their old enemies the Jews. "And a baſtard," or an alien generation (αλλογενεις, ſay the LXX.) "ſhall dwell "in Aſhdod; and I will cut off the pride of "the Philiſtines; and I will take away his "blood out of his mouth, and his abominations "from between his teeth; but he that re-"maineth, even he ſhall be for our God, and "he ſhall be as a governor in Judah and Ekron

"as

"as a Jebuſite." Amidſt theſe revolutions and alterations of affairs in the world, God promiſeth, in the next verſe, to preſerve his temple, while ſo many caſtles and ſtrong holds about Jeruſalem were overturned, ſo many cities ſwept of their inhabitants by the beſom of deſtruction. "And I will encamp "about mine houſe, becauſe of the army, be- "cauſe of him that paſſeth by, and becauſe of "him that returneth: and no oppreſſor ſhall "paſs through them any more; for now have "I ſeen with mine eyes." Then followeth the prophecy in my text—"Rejoice greatly, "O daughter of Sion; ſhout, O daughter of "Jeruſalem: behold, thy King cometh unto "thee; he is juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly, "and riding upon an aſs, and upon a colt, "the foal of an aſs. And I will cut off the "chariot from Ephraim, and the horſe from "Jeruſalem, and the battle bow ſhall be cut "off; and he ſhall ſpeak peace unto the hea- "then: and his dominion ſhall be from ſea "even to ſea, and from the river to the ends "of the earth." As if the prophet had ſpoken in more words to Jeruſalem thus—"Thine

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"eyes, in the generations following, ſhall be-
"hold the flouriſhing pride of ſundry nations,
"each endeavouring to overtop others in
"height of glory and temporal ſtate; each
"ſtriving to keep others under, by human po-
"licy, or ſtrength of war. And whilſt the
"ſight of their mutual conqueſts ſhall poſſeſs
"thy thoughts, thou wilt be ready, in the pride
"of thine heart, to ſay, Jeruſalem and Judah
"one day ſhall have their turn, and in that
"day ſhall the ſons of Jacob, the ſeed of Abra-
"ham and David, be like the monarchs of
"Greece and Perſia, far exalted above the
"kings of other nations; every one able to
"bear arms, gliſtering with his golden ſhield,
"and leading the princes of the heathen, as
"priſoners, bound in chains, and their nobles
"in fetters of iron. The beauty and riches of
"their coſtly temples ſhall deck the chariots
"of my children, which their captives ſhall
"draw in triumph. But thou ſhouldeſt re-
"member, that the promiſed prince of peace,
"of benignity, and juſtice, ſhould not be ſought
"among the tumultuous hosts of war: nor
"canſt thou hope that He, who is the Deſire

"of

" of all nations, ſhould be thy Leader or Ge- DISC.
" neral, to deſtroy thoſe nations. It is glory V.
" and honour enough for thee, glory and ho-
" nour greater than the greateſt conqueror on
" earth could ever compaſs, that the King
" of kings and Lord of lords ſhall be anointed
" and proclaimed King upon the hill of Sion:
" that the inviolable decrees of everlaſting juſtice
" ſhall be given to all the nations under heaven
" from thy courts. And therefore while horſes
" and chariots, and other glorious preparations
" of war, ſhall preſent themſelves to thy view,
" ſuffer them to paſs as they come; and
" reſt aſſured, that thy King, of whoſe com-
" ing thou haſt often been admoniſhed by the
" prophets, is not among them. The man-
" ner of his coming to thee, ſo thou wilt mark
" it, bodes far better tidings to thee and all
" the nations beſides, than can accompany
" the proſperous ſucceſs of wars, or any vic-
" tory ſtained with blood. What king of Ju-
" dah or Iſrael did ever levy an army, though
" in juſt defence of their country and people,
" on ſo fair terms, that no poor amongſt them
" were pinched with taxes for the ſupply?

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"What victory did they ever obtain ſo cheap,
"that many of their children were not forced
"to ſit down with loſs, many wounded, others
"maimed, and ſome always ſlain? But, lo,
"now I bring thee unuſual matter of exulta-
"tion and joy. For behold thy King cometh
"unto thee, whenſoever he cometh, attended
"with juſtice for his guide, and ſalvation for
"his train. He ſhall execute judgment without
"oppreſſion: he ſhall ſave thee, ſo thou wilt
"be ſaved, without deſtroying any, being able
"to make thy lame to go, to give life to thy
"dead, without hazard either of life or limb to
"any that reſts within thy territories. Such
"ſhall be the manner of his coming, and ſuch
"his preſence, that the pooreſt wretch among
"thy children, may think himſelf more happy
"than any king of Judah or Iſrael which
"was before him, ſo he will but conform him-
"ſelf to the temper and demeanour of his Sa-
"viour. For he cometh unto thee, poor and
"lowly, riding upon an aſs, to wean thee from
"the vain hopes of the heathen, from which
"the prophets have ſo often dehorted thy fore-
"fathers. Some put their truſt in horſes, and

"ſome

"ſome in chariots; but thy confidence muſt "be in the Lord thy God, who will always "be thy King, to defend thee, to protect thee, "to ſtrengthen thee through this weakneſs[a]."

Having thus taken a general view of the prophecy, proceed we to make ſome obſervations and reflections upon the ſeveral parts of it, in the order in which they lie.

Beautiful and ſtriking is the manner in which it is introduced. The prophet doth not coldly inform Jeruſalem, that her King ſhould come to her, and that, when he did come, ſhe ought to rejoice. Rrapt into future times, he ſeems to have been preſent at the glorious ſcene. Standing upon mount Olivet, he hears the Hoſannas of the diſciples, and beholds the proceſſion approach towards the gates of Jeruſalem: he turns himſelf to the city, and breaks forth in tranſport. "Rejoice greatly, O "daughter of Sion; ſhout, O daughter of Je- "ruſalem!" Religion, then, hath it's joys;

[a] Dr. JACKSON, vol. ii. p. 843.

a pro-

DISC. V. a prophet calleth us to exult and ſhout; and often as this holy ſeaſon returneth, the church ſecondeth his call. Her ſervices diſpel the gloom of melancholy, and put gladneſs into the hearts of all her children. They are wonderfully calculated to renew good impreſſions in our minds, to increaſe our faith, to invigorate our hope, to blow up the ſacred fires of devotion and charity, and to fill us with holy and heavenly tempers. They produce a joy "which no man taketh from us," and in which "a ſtranger intermeddleth not:" they inſpire a pleaſure which no pain can overcome, of which no time can deprive us, and which death will perfect and inſure to us for ever. Perverſe Jeruſalem rejected joy, and choſe ſorrow for her portion. Glad tidings came to the Gentiles, and were gladly received. The Chriſtian church, formed of them, is now the daughter of Sion, and the new Jeruſalem. To her the promiſes are transferred and made good. She therefore obeyeth the prophet's injunction; ſhe continually, with the holy Virgin, "magnifieth the Lord, and her ſpirit rejoiceth "in God her Saviour."

The

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The next words of our prophet aſſign the reaſon why Jeruſalem was called upon to rejoice, namely, the approach of her King: "Behold "thy King cometh unto thee." A perſon was to viſit Jeruſalem, who ſhould deſerve to be emphatically ſtyled "her King." The nations had their kings and conquerors, their Nebuchadnezzars and Cyrus's, their Alexanders and Cæſars; theſe appeared, in their turns, upon the ſtage, contending for the empire of the world. Each performed the part aſſigned him by an all-directing Providence, and then vaniſhed away. Sion beheld all theſe changes, and ſtill ſurvived the commotions occaſioned by them. The prophets had promiſed her a King, who ſhould overcome her enemies, and triumph glorioufly; who ſhould erect, in the time of the fourth great monarchy, an univerſal and everlaſting kingdom, and give laws to the world; nay, who ſhould govern all things in heaven and earth. At the time predicted, not only Jeruſalem looked for a completion of the prophecies, but the whole earth ſate ſtill, expecting that Judea ſhould give her a King. And, lo, the promiſed King of the

Jews

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Jews is born of the royal houſe and lineage of David. All the circumſtances of his birth, the words of his mouth, and the actions of his life, demonſtrate him to be the Meſſias, foretold by the prophets, from the beginning of the world. He cometh to his own, and Jeruſalem is commanded to rejoice and ſhout; but his own receive him not, and Jeruſalem turns a deaf ear to the voices of all her prophets, not ſuffering herſelf to believe that any thing ſaid by them could refer to Jeſus of Nazareth. Her heart was depraved and hardened: ſhe demanded to be put in poſſeſſion of the empire of this world; ſhe deſpiſed the appearance of her King, with the acclamations of an ignoble multitude, and ſoon nailed a SPIRITUAL monarch to the croſs.

With how different ſenſations are the members of the Chriſtian church affected when they hear the words of Zechariah, "Behold, thy "King cometh unto thee," and read the hiſtory of their accompliſhment in the Goſpel for this day! With inexpreſſible delight we carry

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carry back our thoughts to that happy æra, when the King of the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, made his appearance in the fleſh. We join his train, we attend him in his progreſs towards Jeruſalem, and ſeem to enter with him into the holy city, while, "the multitude of thoſe who go before, and thoſe "who follow after, cry, Hoſanna to the Son "of David; bleſſed is he who cometh in the "name of the Lord." When we behold this ſcene, as preſented to our view at this ſeaſon, we are taught to conceive by it a noble idea of Meſſiah, at his firſt advent, uſhered into the church, as her Lord and King, the prophets going before, and the apoſtles following after him, all proclaiming and bearing teſtimony to Jeſus, all ſinging Hoſanna to the Son of David, all pronouncing the bleſſedneſs of him who thus cometh in the name of Jehovah. We know that this is He to whom all the prophets give witneſs, and that he hath fulfilled thoſe things which were written of him. We know, that he hath overcome our enemies, and triumphed glorioufly; that he hath erected an univerſal and everlaſting kingdom, and

given

DISC. V. given laws to the world; nay, that he doth govern all things in heaven and earth. Of the manner in which he achieved his victories, and of the nature and extent of his kingdom, we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak, as we proceed to conſider the character which our prophet hath drawn of this King of Iſrael. "He is juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly, and "riding on an aſs."

Righteouſneſs, Salvation, and Humility, diſtinguiſh the perſon and reign of Meſſiah. Righteouſneſs leads the way. "He is juſt "or righteous." St. Stephen, in his Apology to the Jews, affirmeth the prophets to have "foreſhewn the coming of Jeſus under the "title of the Juſt One. "Which of the prophets "have not your fathers perſecuted? And they "have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the "coming of the Juſt One; of whom ye have "been now the betrayers and murderers[t]." David in ſpirit thus addreſſeth King Meſſiah, as we are aſſured by St. Paul's application of the paſſage in the firſt chapter of the epiſtle to the Hebrews. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever

[t] Acts vii. 52.

"and

"and ever; a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the "ſceptre of thy kingdom. Thou haſt loved "righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity; therefore "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee "with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows[c]." Jeremiah deſcribeth him as righteous himſelf, and as making others ſo. "The days come, "ſaith Jehovah, that I will raiſe unto David "a Righteous Branch: and a King ſhall reign "and proſper, and ſhall execute Judgment "and Juſtice in the earth. And this is his "name whereby he ſhall be called, JEHO-"VAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS[d]." And indeed, we ſeldom find the kingdom of Chriſt mentioned, but Righteouſneſs is immediately mentioned, as the firſt fruits of it. Righteouſneſs, the Aſtræa of the antients, left the earth at the fall of Adam, and returned again to viſit and to bleſs it, at the birth of Chriſt. He was conceived without ſtain, lived without ſin, and died without guilt. He converſed in the world, yet contracted none of it's pollution, but, like his glorious emblem the light, paſſed through all things undefiled. His bittereſt

[c] Ps. xlv. 5. [d] Jer. xxiii. 6.

enemies,

DISC. V. enemies, Jews and Gentiles, joined to atteſt his uprightneſs. "Have thou nothing to do "with that juſt man[e]." ſaid the wife of Pilate. Pilate himſelf, upon the ſtricteſt examination, declared, "I find no fault in this man[f]." Judas, who had every poſſible opportunity of knowing the character of his maſter, cried out, in an agony of deſpair, "I have betrayed the "innocent blood[g];" and the Roman centurion, who watched at the croſs, gave in his evidence, "Certainly, this was a righteous man[h]." The kingdom which he came to eſtabliſh was a kingdom of righteouſneſs. He called men from the ways of ſin by his ſermons, he allured them from it's pleaſures by his example, he cleanſed them from it's guilt by his blood, and reſcued them from it's power by his Spirit. Where the Goſpel came, idolatry gave place to true piety; every holy and amiable temper was planted and flouriſhed in the hearts of the regenerate; and to be a Chriſtian, was to be every thing that was honeſt, and juſt,

[e] Matth. xxvii. 19. [f] Luke xxiii. 4.
[g] Matth. xxvii. 4. [h] Luke xxiii. 47.

and

and good. Thus did Jeſus of Nazareth anſwer his title of "the Juſt One," and evince himſelf to be the true "Melchiſedech," or "King of Righteouſneſs." The Jews choſe not to be the ſubjects of ſuch a King, and declared, they "would not have this man to "reign over them." Therefore the kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof. Be it our care, while we celebrate the advent of our King, not to forget this part of his character; and let us reſt aſſured, that if we would be his ſubjects, as well as paſs for ſuch, and ſhare the bleſſings of his reign, as well as talk of them, we muſt be like him. His ſubjects are his *children*; and none will be finally owned by him as ſuch, who bear not impreſſed upon them the ſimilitude of their *Father*.

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Salvation is the next ſign and token which Zechariah hath given us, whereby to know the King of Zion. "He is juſt, and having "Salvation." He was to execute that part of the regal office, which conſiſteth in reſcuing

DISC. V. a people from their oppreſſors. Whoever reads the hiſtory of Iſrael, finds it contain an account of many Saviours, raiſed up, at ſundry times, for this purpoſe. Such were Moſes, Barack, Gideon, Sampſon, and many more in the ages after them. But no one of theſe was "He that ſhould come." They, like the legal prieſts, "were not ſuffered to continue, by "reaſon of death;" the church was ſtill taught to "look for another" and a more glorious Saviour, in the latter days; the prophecies were full of the great Salvation which he ſhould effect; ſo great, that, in compariſon of it, former deliverances were not to be mentioned, unleſs as ſhadows and faint reſemblances of that grand and complete one. At the time appointed, Jeſus of Nazareth appeared in this character, and brought his credentials with him, the authenticity of which was fairly allowed by a maſter in Iſrael: "No man can "do theſe miracles that thou doeſt, except "God were with him." At the birth of Chriſt, an herald from heaven proclaimed him to the ſhepherds by this ſtyle and title. "Be-"hold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,

"which

"which ſhall be to all people. For unto you "is born this day, in the city of David, a SA-"VIOUR." And if tidings of Salvation are not tidings of joy, what tidings can be ſuch? The greater the Salvation, the greater ought to be the joy. And what is the deliverance of a ſingle people from a temporal adverſary, when compared with the Salvation of the whole world from the oppreſſion of the ſpiritual enemy; from ſin, and ſickneſs, and ſorrow, and pain, and death, and hell? This was the ſalvation which Jeſus undertook to effect; and his miracles declared him equal to the mighty taſk. He forgave ſin, he healed ſickneſs, he diſpelled ſorrow, he removed pain, he raiſed the dead, he caſt out devils. Had not the prophet reaſon to cry out, "Rejoice greatly, "O daughter of Zion; ſhout, O daughter of "Jeruſalem; behold, thy King, behold, thy "righteous Saviour cometh unto thee?" But the daughter of Zion would have ſhut her gates againſt this righteous Saviour; the daughter of Jeruſalem renounced her part and portion in ſuch Salvation. She had ſet her heart upon being great in this world, whereas

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Chriſt came to make her ſo in another. And whenever Chriſtians ſhall reſemble Jews in the turn of their affections, whenever they ſhall regard religion only as a means of aggrandizing themſelves upon earth, in their hearts they will entertain the ſame notion of the Salvation of Jeſus, and the ſame contempt for it, that the Jews did. But let the ſufferings of Jeruſalem warn us, that we ſhare not in her guilt, leſt we ſhare alſo in her puniſhment, and come into the ſame condemnation. We acknowlege for our Saviour the perſon whom Iſrael rejected. Let us not miſtake the nature of his Salvation. "He ſhall be called JESUS," ſaith the angel to his holy mother, "for he "ſhall *ſave* his people from their SINS[1]."

As the Salvation to be wrought by King Meſſiah was to be ſo different from that wrought by all other kings and conquerors, different likewiſe was to be his appearance and demeanour. "Behold, thy King cometh "unto thee; he is juſt, and having ſalvation,

[1] Mat. 1. 21.

"lowly

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"lowly, and riding on an aſs." This is demonſtration againſt the Jews, that how great ſoever, in the end, the external glory of Meſſiah is to be (and neither they nor we can ſet that too high), yet he was once to viſit his people in great humility; he was to appear, at his firſt advent, in a ſtate of humiliation. The nature of his undertaking required it, and their own law and prophets are clear and expreſs upon the ſubject. Though God, he was to become man; "A virgin ſhall conceive, and "bear a ſon, and they ſhall call his name "IMMANUEL, which is being interpreted, "GOD WITH US[k]." He was to be "a "man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief;" "a man without form or comelineſs[l]," without the glare of outward ſplendor to recommend him; "his viſage," on the contrary, by ſuffering affliction, was to be "marred more "than any man, and his form more than the "ſons of men[m]." He was to keep the law, and to die for ſin. "Sacrifice and offering

[k] Iſai. vii. 14. Matt. i. 23.
[l] Iſai. liii. [m] Iſai. lii. 14.

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" thou wouldeſt not—burnt offering and ſin " offering haſt thou not required. Then ſaid " I, Lo I come: in the volume of the book " it is written of me; I delight to do thy " will, O my God; yea, thy law is within " my heart[a]. He made his ſoul an offering " for ſin; he was cut off out of the land of the " living; he made his grave with the rich[b]." If words can render any thing plain, it is plain from theſe paſſages, that Meſſiah was to be an humble and a ſuffering character. The types and the prophecies are as poſitive for his humiliation, as they are for his exaltation; nor could any one perſon accompliſh them all, without being equally remarkable for lowlineſs and meekneſs, glory and honour. The modern Jews, ſenſible of this, have framed to themſelves two Meſſiahs; one, Ben Joſeph, of the tribe of Ephraim, deſigned to be poor and contemptible, and to undergo great indignities; the other, Ben David, of the tribe of Judah, who is to be victorious, to conquer all the earth before them, and to live for ever

[a] Pſ. xl. 7. Heb. x. 7. [b] Iſai. liii.

in

in temporal grandeur. This idle dream, contrary to the tenor of the whole Old Teſtament, and unknown to their expoſitors before Chriſt came, ſhews us, that blindneſs hath happened to Iſrael not for want of light, but becauſe they have ſhut their eyes againſt it till they cannot now open them, to behold the brightneſs of it's ſhining; to view Jeſus of Nazareth, as the end of their law, and the accompliſhment of their prophecies. To an unprejudiced perſon, acquainted with that law, and thoſe prophecies, the ſight of the lowly Jeſus, entering Jeruſalem in great humility, and in ſtill greater, bowing his head and expiring on mount Calvary, is a no leſs ſtriking evidence of his being the Meſſiah, than his glorious reſurrection from the dead, and triumphant aſcenſion into heaven. The Scriptures muſt needs be fulfilled, in one reſpect, as well as the other. Thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and thus it behoved him to humble himſelf, in order to his ſuffering. Through pride Adam fell, and therefore by lowlineſs muſt Chriſt be exalted. "An haugh- DISC. V.

DISC. V. "ty ſpirit goeth before a fall; but before "honour is Humility[p]."

In this ſtate of meekneſs and lowlineſs, was Chriſt to gain a complete victory over the enemies of man's ſalvation. The warfare was new, and it is no wonder that the weapons employed in it ſhould be uncommon. Other warriors prepare their horſes and their chariots, their bows, their ſpears, and their ſhields. But Meſſiah diſarms his followers, in order that they may overcome. For thus our prophet goes on; "And I will cut off the chariot "from Ephraim, and the horſe from Jeruſa-"lem, and the battle bow ſhall be cut off: "And he ſhall ſpeak peace unto the heathen." Could a plainer declaration have been made, that the conqueſts of Meſſiah were not to be of a ſecular nature; that his kingdom was not of this world? "If my kingdom were of "this world," ſaith he himſelf, "then would "my ſervants fight[q]." But lo, he taketh from them the weapons of war. Was there a

[p] Prov. xviii. 12. [q] John xviii. 36.

ſhield

ſhield or ſword ſeen among the thouſands of the Iſrael of God? No ſhield, but that of faith; no ſword, but that of the Spirit. Like their great leader, they encountered their adverſaries with patience, and overcame by ſuffering. So far was the advent of Chriſt from carrying with it any appearance of war, that the nations at the time lay huſhed in the tranquillity of an univerſal peace. "He ſpake "peace to the heathen," as well as to his own people the Jews. The waves of this troubleſome world ceaſed to toſs themſelves, and a delightful calm ſeemed to forebode the approach of thoſe halcyon days, when the Prince of Peace ſhould make his abode amongſt us; like the ſtillneſs of that hallowed night, on which the angelic choir deſcended, to ſing "Peace on earth;" peace with God, by the pardon of ſin; peace with ourſelves, by the anſwer of a clear conſcience; peace with one another, by mutual charity. O divine Peace, how lovely and how pleaſant doſt thou appear! How happy and heavenly is the kingdom of Meſſiah, where thou art to be found! Who would not wiſh to ſee, who would

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would not labour to promote the full accompliſhment of the laſt clauſe of the prophecy we have been conſidering, in the extenſion of this kingdom and dominion of Chriſt "from "ſea to ſea, and from the river to the ends "of the earth;" that ſo all the nations of the world might remember themſelves, and turn to the Lord Jeſus, as many did at the firſt preaching of his Goſpel. And let the daughter of Zion lead the way, reſtored to her preeminence among the churches. We will not envy her the honour, as ſhe formerly envied us Gentiles, but rather rejoice and ſhout with her, in the day when ſhe ſhall be led to acknowlege her King; the King of Righteouſneſs, Salvation, and Peace: the once lowly, but now highly exalted Jeſus of Nazareth; who, as at this time, came to viſit us in great humility, and ſhall come again, at the appointed hour, to judge the world; when we ſhall behold him, glorious as Jeruſalem herſelf can wiſh, riding upon the heavens in power and majeſty unutterable, amidſt the acclamations of ſaints and angels.

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DISCOURSE VI.

THE KING OF GLORY.

REVELATIONS I. 7.

Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo that pierced him; and all the kindreds of the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him. Even ſo, Amen.

IT is the peculiar ſupputation of the Chriſtian church, as a pious writer well obſerves, to begin the year, and to commence the annual courſe of her ſervices, at this time of Advent, herein differing from all other accounts of time whatſoever. The reaſon of which ſeems plainly to be this, becauſe in the numbering her days and meaſuring her ſeaſons, ſhe does not ſo much regard the ſun in the

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the firmament, as the great ſun of Righteouſneſs, her Lord and Saviour who is in heaven. She conſiders herſelf as "redeemed from the "earth;" and therefore no longer confined to the calculations of the world, or obliged to direct herſelf by the courſes of the material luminaries. It is her employment to make known to her children the time of ſalvation, called in Scripture, "the year of the redeemed;" and this year was introduced by the everlaſting day-ſpring from on high viſiting her; whereby ſhe became, what the Spirit ſtyles her, in the Revelation, "a city that has "no need of the ſun, neither of the moon to "ſhine in it, for the Lord God and the Lamb "are the light and the glory thereof."

The leſſons and ſervices therefore for the four firſt Sundays in her liturgical year propoſe to our meditations the twofold Advent of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, teaching us that it is he who was to come, and did come, to redeem the world; and that it is he alſo, who ſhall come again, to be our judge. Theſe two Advents involve in them and comprehend between

tween them the whole counſel of God for the redemption of mankind, by the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, with the final iſſue of that counſel in reſpect of each individual, to be manifeſted at his coming to judgment.

The end propoſed by the church, in ſetting theſe two appearances of Chriſt together before us, at this time, is, to beget in our minds proper diſpoſitions to celebrate the one, and expect the other; that ſo, with joy and thankfulneſs, we may now "go to Bethlehem, and "ſee this thing which is come to paſs, which "the Lord hath made known unto us;" even the Son of God come to viſit us in great humility! and thence, with faith unfeigned, and hope immoveable, aſcend in heart and mind to meet the ſame Son of God in the air, coming in glorious majeſty, to judge the quick and dead.

And certainly, if any thing can lead men to repentance, and turn the hearts of the diſobedient to the wiſdom of that Juſt One, the wiſdom which maketh wiſe unto ſalvation, through

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through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, it muſt be the united conſiderations of his mercy and his juſtice: his infinite mercy during the day of grace, when all ſins, that can be repented of, are forgiven unto men; his inexorable juſtice at the day of retribution, when he ſhall infallibly render unto every man according as his work ſhall be. And perhaps there is no better method of ſtirring up our wills to procure an intereſt, or of diſcovering the intereſt we already poſſeſs in the love of Chriſt, than by viewing in their proper colours the terrors of his judgment, as they will ſhew themſelves to the aſtoniſhed world at that awful hour of his ſecond Advent; when the maſk put upon falſe principles and evil actions ſhall drop off, and all things be eſtimated by the meaſures of Chriſtianity, and the ſtandard of the Goſpel of Jeſus.

The words of the divine and well beloved John now read are, it is preſumed, not improper for this purpoſe, as they evidently fall in with the deſign of our church at this ſeaſon, and ſpeak the ſame language with her Advent ſervices—"Behold, he cometh with clouds,

"and

" and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo DISC.
" that pierced him; and all the kindreds of VI.
" the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him. Even
ſo, Amen."

In theſe words we may obſerve,

I. Chriſt's Advent to judgment, with the manner of it: " Behold, he " cometh with clouds."

II. The circumſtance of the world's beholding him, and the effect it ſhall produce: " Every eye ſhall ſee him, " and they alſo that pierced him; " and all the kindreds of the earth " ſhall wail becauſe of him."

III. The faith and hope of the church, diſplayed by her wiſhing and praying for his manifeſtation, notwithſtanding all the terrors that are to attend it: " Even ſo. Amen."

Firſt, then, we are to conſider Chriſt's Advent to judgment. There is ſomething wonderfully

DISC. VI. wonderfully awful and affecting in the ſhort deſcription the text gives us of it. The beautiful manner, particularly, in which it is introduced, is worthy notice. St. John, having occaſion to mention his dear Lord and Maſter, at whoſe command he wrote this epiſtle to the churches, fired and tranſported at the glorious name, runs on with amazing rapidity, enumerating the bleſſings of the Redemption which is by him; and having carried him from his croſs to his throne, and aſcribed all glory to him ſitting upon it, immediately he ſees him in the clouds, and breaks forth in the words of the text. The whole paſſage runs thus: "John to the ſeven churches which are in "Aſia, Grace be unto you, and peace "from him which is, and which was, and "which is to come; and from the ſeven ſpirits "which are before his throne; and from Jeſus "Chriſt, who is the faithful witneſs, and the "firſt begotten from the dead, and the prince "of the kings of the earth; unto him that "loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his "own blood, and hath made us kings and "prieſts unto God and his father; unto him be "glory

" glory and dominion for ever and ever. DISC. VI.
" Amen.—Behold, he cometh!" It is evident likewiſe, at firſt ſight, how well this ſudden and abrupt introduction is calculated to awaken our attention to what follows. " The " corruptible body, alas! preſſeth down the " ſoul that muſeth on many things," and eſpecialy when it muſeth on the things of eternity. Multitudes lie aſleep in their ſins, amuſed with deluſive dreams; dead to their true views and intereſts as a corpſe ſleeping in the duſt is dead to the views and intereſts of this life. Therefore the Holy Spirit, about to make proclamation of Chriſt's ſecond Advent, firſt ſounds a trumpet in Sion, and an alarm in the holy mountain, and uſhers it in with an emphatical—*Behold!* which, like the voice of that wakeful bird that gives the firſt notice of the approach of the morning, and as a prelude to the Archangel's trump, which is to give notice of the approach of the laſt morning that ſhall ever riſe upon the world, is deſigned to awaken a careleſs and indolent generation out of it's lethargy, importing the ſame in this place, with thoſe other frequent calls of the apoſtles and prophets—" Awake, thou " that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and

DISC. VI. "shall give thee light. Arise, shine, for thy "light is coming, and the glory of the Lord "is rising upon thee."

"Behold, he cometh!" And is not this a sight most worthy of our attention? Is it not very meet, right and our bounden duty, that we should open the eyes of our faith, which the bewitching cup of pleasure and vanity, mingled by a deceitful world for our destruction, has charmed to sleep? that we should "lift up our heads, and look up, to see our "redemption drawing nigh?" For draw nigh it will, and it does, whether we consider it, or not. Every evening takes a day from the world's duration, The portion of the wicked is so much less, and the time of their punishment so much approached; the sufferings of the patient so much diminished, and their hopes of deliverance so much increased. Nay, every clock that strikes bids us recollect, that the promise of Christ has then received an additional force: "Behold, I come quickly, "and my reward is with me, to give every man "according as his work shall be." The precise

day

day and hour knoweth no man. Though probably as it was at his first Advent, so likewise will it be at his second. The faithful servants, who are watching for the return of their Lord, and "looking for redemption in Jerusalem," will be able, by the books of the Scriptures, and the signs of the times, to tell when the day is approaching. But what avails a curious disquisition upon the exact period of the world's dissolution? What is likely to be the fate of those malefactors, who, instead of preparing for their trial, spend the small portion of time allotted them, in disputing with each other concerning the hour in which the trumpet shall sound, and the judge make his entry? In this, above all other cases, "blessed is "the man that feareth always. Blessed is that "servant, who, whether his master cometh at "the second watch, or whether he cometh "at the third watch," is ready to receive him, and exhibit his accounts. Blessed, in short, is he, and he only, who hears continually these words of the beloved John: "Behold, "he cometh."

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He cometh, indeed! But how changed, How different his appearance from what it was! How ſhall we be able to conceive of it as it deſerves, to raiſe our thoughts from the voice of the tender babe in the manger, bewailing our ſins that brought him thither, to the voice of the Son of God, from which the heavens and the earth ſhall fly away, and no place be found for them any more for ever! Yet ſo it is. Behold, he who came in ſwaddling clothes, cometh with clouds. He who came to preach the day of Salvation, cometh again to proclaim the day of vengeance. He who was led as a lamb to the ſlaughter, leads his ten thouſands to the prey, as the lion of the tribe of Judah. He who cried not, nor lifted up his voice againſt his enemies upon earth, thunders with the glorious voice of his excellency againſt them from heaven. He who never brake a bruiſed reed, rules the nations with a rod of iron, and breaks them in pieces like a potter's veſſel. He who quenched not the ſmoking flax, extinguiſhes the great lights of the world; darkens the ſun, and turns the moon into blood; commands the ſtars from their

their ſtations, and the dead from their graves; ſhakes the powers of heaven, and the foundations of the earth, and all hearts that are not fixed on him. DISC. VI.

The trumpet ſounds, and he is coming. The everlaſting gates of heaven, which lifted up their heads for the King of Glory to enter in, are again lifted up; and behold the proceſſion that comes forth of them, deſcending to this lower world, as it is deſcribed by one who ſaw it in viſion, "I ſaw heaven opened, "and behold a white horſe, and he that "ſate upon him was called faithful and true," the accompliſher of all his promiſes; "and in "righteouſneſs he doth judge" the world, "and make war" againſt all that oppoſe him. "His eyes were as a flame of fire," diſcerning and deſtroying the counſels of his adverſaries; "and on his head were many crowns;" all the kingdoms of this world were become his; "and he had a name written that no one "knew, but he himſelf," the ineffable name of the divine eſſence. "And he was clothed "with a veſture dipt in blood," the garment of

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vengeance. "And his name," by which he is known to men, "is called THE WORD "OF GOD. And the armies which were in "heaven followed him upon white horſes," attending him in his glory, "clothed in fine "linen white and clean," which is the righteouſneſs of ſaints. "And out of his mouth "goeth a ſharp ſword," namely, his holy word, "that with it he ſhould ſmite the na-"tions. And he ſhall rule them," that have rejected the golden ſceptre of mercy, "with "a rod of iron. And he treadeth the vine-"preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty "God. And he hath on his veſture and on "his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, "AND LORD OF LORDS."

When Joſhua, at the head of the armies of Iſrael, ſurrounded Jericho, at the ſound of the trumpet, the walls fell flat. When the divine Joſhua, at the head of the armies of the true Iſrael of God, the church triumphant, ſurrounds this city of deſtruction, can the event be otherwiſe? Aſſuredly it cannot. The ſtrength, beauty, and glory of the world will fall,

fall, and come to nothing, at the moment when the trumpet, ſounding from the one end of heaven to the other, ſhall give notice, that the judge of all the earth is coming to his judgment-ſeat in the air. The throne that ſhall be there erected for him is thus deſcribed by Daniel—"I beheld till the thrones were caſt "down, and the Ancient of Days did ſit; "whoſe garment was white as ſnow, and the "hair of his head like the pure wool. His throne "was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as "burning fire: a fiery ſtream iſſued, and came "forth from before him: thouſand thouſands "miniſtered unto him, and ten thouſand times "ten thouſand ſtood before him. The judg-"ment was ſet, and the books were opened." In the clouds over our heads is this judgment-ſeat to be formed; as it is alſo written in the book of Pſalms—"Clouds and darkneſs are "round about him, righteouſneſs and judg-"ment are the habitation of his throne." From amidſt this thick darkneſs the lightnings, thoſe ſwift executioners of divine vengeance, ſhall flaſh abroad over the earth, while ten thouſand thunders, rolling forth from the glori-

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ous God that maketh them, ſhall at once utter their tremendous voices: as it is written again in the ſame book of Pſalms—"Our God ſhall "come, and ſhall not keep ſilence," as once, when like a ſheep, dumb before his ſhearers he opened not his mouth. "A fire ſhall now "devour before him, and it ſhall be very tem- "peſtuous round about him. The Lord," even the Lord Jeſus, "ſhall thunder out of "heaven, and the Higheſt give his thunder, "hail-ſtones and coals of fire." By the bright- neſs of his coming all enemies ſhall ſoon be conſumed, all clouds ſhall paſs away; and the judge ſhall appear upon his radiant throne, like his emblem the ſun; ſo that there ſhall not be a tongue but muſt own with the church, in her triumphant ſong, "Heaven and earth "are full of the majeſty of thy glory." And as Chriſt upon his throne, like the ſun, will ſee all, ſo, like the ſun, he will be ſeen of all; which brings us to the

II^d Thing to be conſidered, namely, The circumſtance of mankind beholding him, with the effect it ſhall produce upon them: "Every

"eye

" eye ſhall ſee him; and they alſo that pierced DISC.
" him; and all the kindreds of the earth ſhall VI.
" wail becauſe of him."

The judge being ſeated on his throne, and all things ſubdued to him, " before him ſhall " be gathered all nations," all the innumerable multitudes of men and women that have lived in every age, and every country. Every eye ſhall ſee the God that made it, and commanded it to be pure and ſingle. How it has fulfilled his commandment, will then be known. The ſight of Chriſt upon his throne will be a trying ſight; the effects of it will enter the heart like the piercings of a ſword, and reveal all it's thoughts in the countenance; hypocriſy ſhall then be no more. " Every eye ſhall ſee " him." But who ſhall be able to endure the " ſight? Even " they that pierced him" muſt " look on him whom they pierced." Pilate will behold the poor, deſpiſed Galilean, whom he ſcourged, and delivered to be crucified, now ready to judge him and all the world. Herod and his men of war, who mocked and ſet him at nought, will ſee him encompaſſed with

DISC. VI. with ten thouſands of ſaints and angels, about to ſpeak unto them in his wrath, and trouble them in his ſore diſpleaſure. A corrupt temporiſing Sanhedrim, who were inſtant with loud voices that he might be crucified, will ſee heaven and earth fly away from before the face of that prieſt, of whom they, his repreſentatives, were the betrayers and murderers. They who platted and put on the crown of thorns, ſhall be ſtruck blind with rays of glory beaming from his ſacred head. And they who drove the nails, and he who thruſt the ſpear into his ſide, ſhall ſee that ſame Jeſus, whom they pierced, exalted above every name that is named in heaven and earth.

But think not that the Jews, who crucified Chriſt, are the only perſons that will have reaſon to tremble at this ſight. There are others who may dread it, as well as they. Thoſe, whoſe ſins, yet unrepented of, ſharpened the nails, and pointed every thorn. Thoſe careleſs ones who are at eaſe; whoſe hearts, harder than the rocks that rent aſunder at his crucifixion, remain unmoved at the ſight of

of the Son of God, dying upon the croſs for them, and calling from thence to a thoughtleſs world—"Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs "by? Behold, and ſee, if there be any ſor- "row like unto my ſorrow which is done "unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted "me in the day of his fierce anger?" DISC. VI

Biſhop Taylor, in one of his Advent ſermons, has an expoſtulation with a ſinner upon this ſubject, which is ſo juſt, beautiful and affecting, and ſo infinitely beyond any thing I can offer, that I ſhall not only have your pardon, but your thanks, for reciting it. "It was for "thy ſake that the judge did ſuffer unſpeakable pains, ſuch as were ſufficient to reconcile all "the world to God. And to conſider that "thou haſt, for thine own particular, made "all this in vain, and ineffective; that Chriſt "thy Lord and judge ſhould be tormented "for nothing; that thou wouldeſt not accept "felicity and pardon, when he purchaſed "them at ſo dear a price; it muſt needs be "an infinite condemnation to thee. How "ſhalt thou look upon him that fainted and "died

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"died for love of thee, and thou didſt ſcorn
"his miraculous mercies? How ſhalt thou
"dare to behold that holy face which brought
"ſalvation to thee, and thou didſt turn away,
"and fall in love with death, and deformity,
"and ſin? And yet in the beholding that
"face conſiſts much of the glories of eternity.
"Surely all the pains and the paſſions, the
"ſorrows and the groans, the humility and
"poverty, the labours and the watchings, the
"prayers and the ſermons, the miracles and
"the prophecies, the whip and the nails,
"the death and the burial, the ſhame and
"the ſmart, the croſs and the grave of Je-
"ſus, ſhall be laid upon thy ſcore, if thou haſt
"refuſed the mercies and deſign of all their
"holy ends and purpoſes. And if thou re-
"membereſt what a calamity that was, which
"broke the Jewiſh nation in pieces, when
"Chriſt came to judge them, for their mur-
"dering him, who was their king, and the
"prince of life; and conſidereſt, that this was
"but a dark image of the terrors of the day
"of judgment, thou mayeſt then apprehend,
"that there is ſome ſtrange unſpeakable evil

"in

" in ſtore for one who refuſes the ſalvation of " Jeſus, and rather chooſes that Satan ſhould " rejoice in his deſtruction, than that Jeſus " ſhould triumph in his felicity."

Thus far this excellent prelate. And all who conſider the matter in this it's true and proper light, cannot wonder at the effect which, as St. John in the text tells us, the ſight of Chriſt will produce among the kindreds of the earth. They ſhall wail becauſe of Chriſt, when they ſee him whom they have pierced by their ſins, and crucified afreſh. And that wailing muſt needs be terrible, when millions of men and women ſhall at the ſame inſtant fearfully cry out, and the noiſe ſhall mingle with the trumpet of the Archangel, and the thunders of the dying and groaning heavens paſſing away with a great noiſe, and the roaring of the flames in which the earth and all the works that are therein ſhall then be diſſolving. The terror and lamentation throughout the world at that time, with the foreboding pangs and convulſions of departing nature, will be ſuch as never were, ſince the day that God

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God created man upon the earth. Include in your idea the deſtruction of the old world by the flood, the overthrow of the cities of the plain by fire and brimſtone, and the deſolation of Jeruſalem by the Roman armies, with an aſſemblage of the plagues of Egypt, and the miſeries and calamities felt by men in all ages, yet your conceptions will fall as far ſhort of the things themſelves, as the ſhadow does of the ſubſtance. Nothing can exceed our bleſſed Lord's deſcription of this laſt ſcene, but it's actual accompliſhment— "There ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the "moon, and in the ſtars: and upon the earth "diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity, the ſea "and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing "them for fear, and for looking after thoſe "things which are coming on the earth; "for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken. "And then ſhall appear the ſign of the ſon "of man in heaven? and then ſhall all the "tribes of the earth mourn, and they ſhall ſee "the ſon of man coming in the clouds of hea-"ven, with power and great glory." At this moſt awful and tremendous hour, when the

ſon

ſon of man ſhall diſplay his banner the croſs in the clouds; when the ſea and the waters of the great deep ſhall roar; when the deſtroying angel ſhall again go forth at midnight into the land of Egypt, and there ſhall be a great cry throughout all the land, becauſe of death and judgment; then ſhall be brought to paſs that which is written in the Revelation; "I "beheld when the kings of the earth, and "the great men, and the rich men, and the "chief captains, and the mighty men, and "every bondman, and every freeman hid "themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of "the mountains, and ſaid to the mountains "and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the "face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and "from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great "day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be "able to ſtand?". DISC. VI.

A view of the terrors of the Lord has by this time, perhaps, made us all ready to join in aſking this laſt queſtion: "Who ſhall be "able to ſtand?" And we cannot help taking up our parable with Balaam; "Alas! who "ſhall

DISC. VI. "shall live, when God doth this?" But thanks be to God, an answer will be abundantly ministered unto us by a consideration of the

III. And last point proposed, namely, the faith and hope of the church, who wishes for Christ's manifestation, notwithstanding all the terrors that are to attend it, as appears by the remaining words of my text—"Even so. Amen."

For these are not the words of St. John only, but they carry in them the prayers and sighs of Christians, sent up to the throne of grace through him. It is not "the Spirit" alone, speaking by him, that says "Come," but "the bride," or church, also says the same. "How long, O Lord, holy and true," is the voice of the departed spirits, resting from their labours under the altar in heaven, and waiting for the completion of their glory, at the day of their Redeemer's triumph. And that part of the church which is still militant, and sojourns in the wilderness, may be heard earnestly joining in the same expostulation, in the

the lxivth chapter of the prophet Iſaiah: "O "that thou wouldeſt rend the heavens, that "though wouldeſt come down, that the moun- "tains might flow down at thy preſence; as "when the melting fire burneth, the fire "cauſeth the waters to boil; to make thy "name known to thine adverſaries, that the "nations may tremble at thy preſence! When "formerly thou didſt terrible things, which "we looked not for, thou cameſt down, the "mountains flowed down at thy preſence." Nay, we ourſelves, every one of us, daily put up the very ſame petition to God, when we pray that "his kingdom may come;" for his kingdom of glory cannot come, till all theſe things ſhall have been brought to paſs. And again, when, ſtanding at the grave's mouth, we have before our eyes a plain proof, that "man, who "is born of a woman, hath but a ſhort time to live" in this world; we earneſtly beſeech the Father of Spirits, "that it would pleaſe "him of his gracious goodneſs ſhortly to ac- "compliſh the number of his elect, and to "haſten his kingdom." Thus the coming of that day, in which "all the kindreds of the

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DISC. VI. "earth ſhall wail," is the conſtant ſubject of the wiſhes and prayers of the Sons of God. A ſound Chriſtian faith gives them confidence towards God, and teaches them, without hypocriſy, to pray for the ſecond Advent of Chriſt. For although in that day "he cometh "with clouds," yet God's promiſe is, that whenever "he brings his cloud" over the earth, his "bow ſhall be in the cloud," the ſure token of the "everlaſting covenant of "mercy between him and all fleſh." And accordingly, when Ezekiel and St. John ſaw Chriſt upon his terrible throne, he appeared encompaſſed with a RAINBOW, to teach us that even the throne of judgment is encircled by mercy, which rejoices againſt judgment. All the cries of deſpairing nations, the thunders of heaven, and the horrible noiſes of the periſhing earth, ſhall not keep thoſe, who have been indeed the diſciples of Jeſus, from hearing a voice ſaying unto them, "Come up "hither." Yea, and they who in faith and patience have waited for the Lord, as the prophet Iſaiah ſpeaks, "ſhall then renew their "ſtrength, they ſhall mount up as eagles."

They

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They ſhall aſcend to meet their Redeemer in the air, and the eye of faith ſhall ſtedfaſtly behold the glories of the Sun of Righteouſneſs. Marvel no longer then that the church ſo paſſionately deſires the manifeſtation of Chriſt. Marvel not that ſhe ſhould ſay, COME! when the Advent of him to whom ſhe ſpeaks is to be the day of her eſpouſals, and the day of the gladneſs of her heart; the end of her Saviour's ſufferings, and her faith; a day of triumph, and everlaſting felicity. Let the men of the world lament, for their joy is ended, and their ſorrows beginning; but let the redeemed be glad, for their ſorrows are at an end, and their joys beginning. Let the "tribes of the earth mourn," but "let Iſrael "rejoice in him that made him, and let the "children of Sion be joyful in their king." For the trumpet which proclaims the deſtruction of the ungodly, declares at the ſame time the ſalvation of the righteous. When that *trumpet* founds throughout the land, the eternal *jubilee* is begun. There is liberty for the captives, and the opening of the priſon doors, even the gates of the grave, for thoſe to come

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out, who lie there in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death; and every child of God is free to return to his poſſeſſion and inheritance, and to the family of his heavenly Father. When they who have loved the world, inſtead of him whom the world crucified, and truſted in the falſe glory and riches of earthly Babylon, ſhall "ſtand weeping and wailing, to ſee "the ſmoke of her burning, ſaying, Alas, alas, "that great city, that was clothed in purple, "and fine linen, and ſcarlet, and decked with "gold, and precious ſtones; how in one hour "is ſo great riches come to nought?"—What ſaith the Spirit to the church? "Rejoice over "her, thou heaven, and ye holy Apoſtles and "Prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." And what ſaith the church herſelf? "The "kingdoms of this world are become the "kingdoms of our Lord and his Chriſt, and "he ſhall reign for ever and ever. Hallelujah, "for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let "us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to "him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, "and his wife hath made herſelf ready."

And

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And now, my brethren, whoſe heart does not burn within him, when he hears the melody of the celeſtial choir chaunting forth the praiſes of their victorious Redeemer, round his glorious throne? Is there a ſingle perſon here, whoſe ſoul has not a deſire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord, and to bear his part in the never-ending chorus? But know, O man, whoſoever thou art, that haſt this deſire and longing, know thou muſt be a penitent upon earth, before thou canſt be a ſaint in heaven. Thou muſt be holy in time, if thou wouldeſt be glorious in eternity. Acquaint now therefore thyſelf with God, and be at peace with him, thyſelf, and all mankind; thereby, and thereby only, ſhall good come unto thee at thy latter end. Stop not thine ears, and harden not thine heart againſt inſtruction, when it is the day of trial and probation in the wilderneſs. Receive now, I pray thee, the law of the Moſt High; retire, and meditate upon it, and lay up his words in thy heart; nor ſuffer the world to rob thee of that wiſdom which is more precious than

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rubies, and to which all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared. Fear not, neither be diſmayed, becauſe of the multitude of thy paſt tranſgreſſions, which preſent themſelves to thy troubled conſcience, and ſet themſelves in array againſt thee. God can forgive, if thou canſt repent. Nay, he will "give "thee repentance unto life," if thou wilt requeſt it of him. If thou return to the Almighty, thou ſhalt yet be built up, and, impoſſible as it may appear, thou ſhalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle: thou ſhalt ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do good: thou ſhalt caſt off the works of darkneſs, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life: thou ſhalt have thy delight in the Almighty, and lift up thy face unto God: thou ſhalt make thy prayer unto him, and he ſhall hear thee; he ſhall not lay thy ſins to thy charge, but forgive thee what is paſt, and give thee grace to amend thy ſinful life; to decline from the ways of the deſtroyer, in which, perhaps, thou haſt unhappily wandered, and incline to the paths of

of wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and walk there- DISC. VI.
in before him all the days of thy life. And when the work ſhall be finiſhed, for which God ſent thee into the world, even the work of thy ſalvation, thou wilt perceive, that to depart and to be with Chriſt is far better than to live here in poſſeſſion of all that the world can give thee. Thou ſhalt go out with joy, and be led forth with peace by angels, who ſhall convey and welcome thy ſpirit to the regions of the living, to the boſoms of our holy fathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, whence ſorrow, grief, and lamentation are baniſhed away, where the light of God's countenance viſits and ſhines continually. And when the trumpet ſhall ſound, and all the tribes and kindreds of the earth ſhall wail, thou ſhall lift up thy voice and ſing for the majeſty and glory of thy triumphant Lord, and call to the heavens and the earth to bear thee company—"Let the hea-"vens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let "the ſea make a noiſe, and all that is there-in; let the field be joyful, and all that is in

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"it; then ſhall all the trees of the wood re-
"joice before the Lord; for he cometh, for
"he cometh to judge the earth, and with
"righteouſneſs to judge the world, and the
"people with his truth. He which teſtifieth
"theſe things ſaith, Surely I come quickly,
"Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus."

DIS-

DISCOURSE VII.

THE WORD INCARNATE.

JOHN I. 14.

The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

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IN contemplating the character of man's Redeemer, it is hard to ſay, whether our admiration be moſt excited by the natural dignity, or the voluntary abaſement of his perſon. To form ſuitable ideas of either, it is expedient to take a view of both. And they appear to the utmoſt advantage in the exordium of St. John's Goſpel, where he ſetteth himſelf to publiſh, firſt, the divinity, and then the incarnation of his moſt adorable and beloved

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loved Maſter. He mentions in due order, and regular gradation, the glory which the WORD had with the Father before man, or the world which he now inhabits, had a being: "In the beginning was the Word, and "the Word was with God, and the Word "was God"—His glory, with reſpect to the creatures, the works of his hands; "All things were made by him, and without him "was not any thing made that was made"—His glory, as the ſole author of life and immortality; "In him was life, and the life was "the light of men"—His glory, with reſpect to man in general, as fallen into a ſtate of ignorance and ſenſuality; "And the light ſhined "in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehend-"ed it not"—His glory, with reſpect to the Jews, to whom he firſt manifeſted himſelf; "He came unto his own, and his own re-"ceived him not"—His glory, with reſpect to Chriſtians; "To as many as believed on him "gave he power to become the ſons of God;" in order to effect which he himſelf became the ſon of man; "The Word was made fleſh, "and dwelt among us, and we beheld his "glory,

" glory, the glory as of the only begotten of " the Father, full of grace and truth." DISC. VII.

Can any thing be more truly noble and ſublime than the former part of the Evangeliſt's diſcourſe, more pleaſing and acceptable than the latter, deſcending from the loftieſt of ſpeculations on the Divine Nature of the Word, to diſplay the benefits of his advent in the fleſh: like the Nile, when rolling from the heights of the Nubian mountains, it diffuſeth riches and plentiouſneſs over all the land of Egypt?

The union of two natures in the perſon of our Lord, which may juſtly be conſidered as the ſource of every bleſſing we enjoy in time, or hope to enjoy in eternity, is expreſſed by St. John in theſe terms, " The Word was made " fleſh *," each of which will be found worthy of our attention. The term *Word* (λογος) was in uſe among the ancient philoſophers, who ſometimes ſpeak of a perſon under that

* Ο λογος σαρξ εγενετο.

appel-

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appellation, as the maker of the univerſe. So Tertullian informs the Gentiles [b]. And Euſebius, in the xi^th book of his Evangelical Preparation, cites a paſſage from Amelius, a celebrated admirer and imitator of Plato, in which he ſpeaks of the λογος as being eternal and the maker of all things. This, he ſays, was the opinion of Heraclitus; and then introduces the beginning of the Goſpel of St. John; concerning whom, it ſeems, he was wont to complain, that he had transferred into his book the ſentiments of his maſter Plato.

But it is not likely that our Evangeliſt either borrowed from, or intended to copy after Plato. And ſince not only Plato, but Pythagoras and Zeno likewiſe, converſed with the Jews, it is not at all wonderful, that we meet with ſomething about a ΘΕΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ, or DIVINE WORD, in their writings. Nor, af-

[b] "Apud veſtros quoque ſapientes λογον, id eſt Sermonem "atque Rationem, conſtat artificem videri univerſitatis. "Hunc enim Zeno determinat factitatorem, qui cuncta "in diſpoſitione formaverit."

ter

ter all, might the philoſopher and the apoſtle uſe the ſame term in the ſame acceptation. DISC. VII.

It is cuſtomary with the writers of the New Teſtament to expreſs themſelves, as much as may be, in the language of the Old, to which, therefore, we muſt have recourſe for an explanation of their meaning, as the penmen of both, under the direction of one Spirit, uſed their terms in the ſame ſenſe.

Now, upon looking into the Old Teſtament, we find, that "the Word of Jehovah [c]," is frequently and evidently the ſtyle of a *perſon*, who is ſaid "to come, to be revealed or mani-"feſted," and the like. As in the xv[th] chapter of Geneſis; "After theſe things, the Word "of Jehovah came unto Abraham in a viſion, "ſaying, Fear not, Abraham; I am thy ſhield, "and thy exceeding great reward. And "Abraham ſaid, Lord God, what wilt thou "give me, &c."—"Behold the Word of the

[c] דבר יהוה

"Lord

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"Lord came unto him, saying, This shalt not "be thine heir—and HE brought him forth "abroad, &c." Thus again, 1 Sam. iii. "Je-"hovah revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh "by the Word of Jehovah." The same person is, at other times, characterized by the title, "the Name of Jehovah[d]," as in Isaiah xxx. 27. "Behold the Name of Jehovah "cometh from far, burning with his anger, "&c."

With regard to the nature of the person thus denominated, whoever shall duly consider the attributes, powers, and actions ascribed to him, will see a reason to think of him not as of a created intelligence, but a person of the divine essence, possessed of all it's incommunicable properties. And it may be noticed, that the Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrasts, continually substitute *the Word of Jehovah*[e], for *Jehovah*[f], ascribing divine characters to the person so named. And the an-

[d] שם יהוה.

[e] מימרא דיי. [f] יהוה.

cient

cient *grecizing* Jews ſpeak in the ſame ſtyle. Thus in that excellent apocryphal book of Wiſdom, ix. 1. "O God, who haſt made all "things εν ΛΟΓΩ σου by the Word:" and again, in the paſſage which ſo wonderfully deſcribes the horrors of that night, never to be forgotten by an Iſraelite, wherein the firſt born of the Egyptians were ſlain—"While all "things were in quiet ſilence, and that night "was in the midſt of her ſwift courſe, thine "Almighty WORD (ΛΟΓΟΣ) leaped down "from heaven, out of thy royal throne, as a "fierce man of war into the midſt of a land "of deſtruction; and brought thine unfeigned "commandment, as a ſharp ſword; and ſtand-"ing up, filled all things with death; and it "touched the heaven, but it ſtood upon "the earth." Chap. xviii. 14. DISC. VII.

But whatever may be thought of theſe paſſages, certain it is, than when St. John comes to treat of this WORD, although, to ſhew a diſtinction of perſonality, he firſt tells us, "The Word was with God;" yet, to prevent all miſtakes on the other ſide of the queſtion, he

DISC. VII. he inſtantly adds, "And the Word was God;" thus evidently aſſerting an unity of eſſence.

And let any impartial man only lay together, upon this ſubject, and duly weigh the few following particulars: that St. John tells us, "The Word was God," and "The Word "was made fleſh;" that St. Paul ſays, "God "was manifeſt in the fleſh; God was in "Chriſt, reconciling the World to himſelf; "and in him dwelt all the fulneſs of the God-"head bodily;" that our Saviour is ſtyled JEHOVAH, a name appropriated to the Deity; that he ſays of himſelf; "I am Alpha and "Omega, the firſt and the laſt*—I am he that "ſearcheth the hearts and reins;" that he created

* Upon this paſſage, which is found Rev. i. 11, Dr. DODDRIDGE has the following Note—"That theſe titles "(which occur juſt above in ver. 8.) ſhould be repeated ſo "ſoon in a connection which demonſtrates they are given "to Chriſt, will appear very remarkable, whatever ſenſe "be given to the eighth verſe. The argument drawn in "the preceding note upon it, would have been ſtrong, "wherever ſuch a paſſage as this had been found; but it's "immediate connection with this, greatly ſtrengthens it.

"And

ated the world by his power, redeemed it by his mercy, and governs it by his providence, and ſhall judge it in righteouſneſs; let any impartial man, I ſay, conſider theſe things with the attention they deſerve, and determine for himſelf, concerning the nature and dignity of him, who was incarnate for our ſalvation. DISC. VII.

Should it be aſked, why this perſon is ſtyled the WORD? the proper anſwer ſeems to be, that as a thought, or conception of the underſtanding, is brought forth and communicated in *ſpeech*, or *diſcourſe*, ſo is the divine will made known by the WORD, who is the offſpring and emanation of the eternal mind; an emanation pure and undivided, like that of light which is the proper iſſue of the ſun, and yet coeval with its parent orb; ſince the ſun cannot be ſuppoſed, by the moſt exact and

" And I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has " done more than any other in the Bible, towards pre- " venting me from giving into that ſcheme, which would " make our Lord Jeſus Chriſt no more than a deified " creature."

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philoſophical imagination, to exiſt a moment, without emitting light; and were the one eternal, the other, though ſtrictly and properly produced by it, would be as ſtrictly and properly coeternal with it. So true is the aſſertion of the Nicene fathers; ſo apt the inſtance ſubjoined for it's illuſtration; "God of God, "light of light:" in apoſtolical language, "The "brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the "expreſs image of his perſon[h]." And whether we conſider our Lord under the idea of the WORD, or that of LIGHT, it will lead us to the ſame concluſion, reſpecting his office. For as no man can diſcover the mind of another, but by the word which proceedeth from him; as no man can ſee the ſun, but by the light which itſelf emitteth; even ſo, "No man knoweth the Father, ſave the Son, "and him to whomſoever the Son will re-"veal him[i]."

This glorious WORD, this uncreated LIGHT, was united to our nature in the perſon of

[h] Απαυγασμα της δοξης, και χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως.

[i] Matth. xi. 27.

Chriſt;

Chriſt; "The Word was made "*fleſh.*" *Fleſh,* which is a part of our nature, ſtands here for the whole; and being the baſer part of the compoſition, ſeems purpoſely mentioned, to intimate, that the care and love of Heaven extend even to that; that our bodies, no leſs than our ſpirits, are included in the ſcheme of redemption; ſo that while the ſoul repoſeth, in humble confidence, on the mercies of Jeſus, the *fleſh* alſo may "reſt in hope." In fleſh, and by the inſtigation of fleſh, the offence was committed. By taking fleſh upon him, therefore, the great Phyſician, the ſovereign healer of all our maladies, corrected the bad qualities of the fountain, that the ſtreams might flow pure and ſalutary. In fleſh the offence was committed, and therefore in fleſh ſatisfaction muſt be made for it. Our High Prieſt was incarnate, that he might have ſomething to offer, more valuable and efficacious than the fleſh of bulls and calves. "Sacrifice and of-
"fering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt
"thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and
"ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure;
"then ſaid I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the

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" book it is written of me) to do thy will, O " God[k]." The nature that ſinned, according to the rules of juſtice, was to ſuffer for ſin; and the Word was made fleſh, for the ſame reaſon, that, when ſo made, he was baptized by John, " To fulfil all righteouſneſs." " And " as Chriſt took manhood, that by it he might " be capable of death, whereunto he humbled " himſelf; ſo, becauſe manhood is the pro- " per ſubject of compaſſion and feeling pity, " which maketh the ſceptre of Chriſt's re- " gency, even in the kingdom of heaven, to " be amiable; he who without our nature " could not on earth ſuffer for the ſins of the " world, doth now alſo, by means thereof, " both make interceſſion to God for ſinners, " and exerciſe dominion over all men, with " a true, a natural, and a ſenſible touch of " pity[l]."

As the Divinity is an object by no means within the graſp of the human underſtanding, it were abſurd to expect an adequate idea of

[k] Pſ. xl. 6. Heb. x. 5.

[l] HOOKER, Eccleſiaſt. Polity, v. 51.

the

the mode of it's union with fleſh, expreſſed in the text by the word "made[m];" "The "Word was *made* fleſh." It ſufficeth, in this caſe, to maintain the general truth of the propoſition againſt thoſe, who, in different ways, by ſubtility and ſophiſtry, have laboured to oppugn and deſtroy it. We muſt not, with Arius, deny the Saviour to be truly God, becauſe he became man; nor aſſert, with Apollinaris, that he was not really man, becauſe he was alſo God. We muſt not, with Neſtorius, rend Chriſt aſunder, and divide him into two perſons; nor, after the example of Eutyches, confound in his perſon thoſe natures which ſhould be diſtinguiſhed. Theſe were the four capital errors, which, in the earlier ages, haraſſed and diſtracted the Chriſtian church, on the point of the incarnation; and in oppoſition to which, the four moſt ancient general councils of Nice, Conſtantinople, Epheſus, and Chalcedon, were called. Whatever was by them decreed, either in declaration of Chriſtian belief, or refutation of hereſy, may all be com- DISC. VII.

[m] Εγενετο.

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priſed, as judicious Hooker well noteth, in four words, "truly, perfectly, indiviſibly, diſtinctly[n];" truly God, perfectly man, indiviſibly one perſon, diſtinctly two natures. "Within "the compaſs of which four heads," ſaith he, "I may truly affirm, that all hereſies, which "touch the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, (whether "they have riſen in theſe latter days, or in "any age heretofore) may be with great fa-"cility brought to confine themſelves[o]."

The apoſtle to the Hebrews, writing on the ſubject of the incarnation, thus expreſſeth himſelf: "He taketh not hold of angels, but he "taketh hold of the ſeed of Abraham[p];" he took, or aſſumed the manhood into God. As the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man, ſo God and man is one Chriſt. The ſoul is not turned into, nor compounded with the body; yet they two, though diſtinct in nature, form one man. The natures are preſerved,

[n] Αληθως, τελεως, αδιαιρετως, ασυγχυτως.

[o] Book v. Sect. 54.

[p] Ου γαρ δηπε αγγελων επιλαμβανεται, αλλα σπερματος Αβρααμ επιλαμβανεται.

without

without confuſion; the perſon is entire, without diviſion[q]. DISC. VII.

Thus, then, as the neceſſity of the caſe, and the counſels of the moſt High required, "The "Word was made fleſh;" and, being made fleſh, "dwelt amongſt us;" not appearing occaſionally, as in ancient times, but making his abode with his creatures; "rejoicing in "the habitable parts of the earth, and delight-"ing to be with the ſons of men;" inſomuch, that we read of thoſe, who were not afraid to aſk him, "Maſter, where dwelleſt thou?" and received this gracious anſwer, "Come "and ſee." "He pitched his tent among "us[r]," a ſtranger and a ſojourner, as his fathers were, concerning whom it is the apoſtle's obſervation, that, though the heirs of the promiſe, they lived in tents, ſhifting from place to place, and declaring, that here, on earth, they had no permanent city, but looked

[q] Sic factum eſt Caro, ut maneret Verbum; non immutando quod erat, ſed aſſumendo quod non erat: noſtra auxit, ſua non minuit; nec ſacramentum pietatis detrimentum Deitatis. CONCIL. CHALCED.

[r] Εσκηνωσεν εν ημιν.

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for one to come. The fleshly tabernacle, in which he resided, at the close of his pilgrimage, was to be taken down, in order afterwards to be re-erected in a more glorious manner, and for ever fixed at the right hand of God; like the GLORY of old, which first travelled with Israel through the wilderness in a moveable tent, and then, at length, rested in a durable temple, on the hill of Sion. As the Captain of our Salvation, the Leader of the Israel of God, he preceded his people to the battle against their spiritual enemies; and now, as King of Glory, crowned with victory and honour, he is seated on his throne, holding forth rewards to all his faithful soldiers and servants, which they are to receive at his hands, when the days of their pilgrimage and warfare shall be ended.

But let us not imagine, that, even in the state of humiliation, his glory was altogether obscured by the veil, within which it dwelt; or that it's frequent irradiations were not sufficient to convince those who beheld the house, how illustrious a guest it had the honour to contain.

contain. Eye-witneſſes have given a different account. "The Word was made fleſh, and "dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the "Father." The ſun was covered with a cloud; but it was the ſun ſtill; and often manifeſted, through the cloud, the power and brightneſs of it's beams.

That Chriſt was man, the labours and the ſorrows, the ſtripes, the wounds, the pains, and the death, which, as man, he ſuffered, did fully atteſt. But they who ſaw the moſt boiſterous elements in nature ceaſe from raging, and compoſe themſelves into a perfect calm, when he ſaid, "Peace, be ſtill;" they who ſaw a foul and inveterate leproſy done away in a moment, by the words, "Be clean;" they who ſaw a body, that had been four days dead, ariſe from it's tomb, when he called, "Lazarus, come forth;" theſe might well aſk, "What manner of man is this, that even the "winds and the ſea," diſeaſe, and death itſelf, "obey him?" Outwardly indeed he appears to be a man; but ſurely, under that form, a celeſtial

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When, at the marriage of Cana, he had cauſed water to change it's nature and properties, and to become wine, it is ſaid, "This beginning of miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Galilee, and *manifeſted forth his glory*; and his diſciples believed on him."

But our Evangeliſt ſaw more. He was one of thoſe who attended their Maſter on the mount of transfiguration, and to whom was vouchſafed a glimpſe of that excellent glory, which the WORD "had with the Father before "the world was," and with which the humanity, by him aſſumed, is now for ever inveſted. The Divinity, enſhrined within, communicated it's radiance outwardly to the body, and even to the garments, till mortality ſeemed to be ſwallowed up of life; "His face did ſhine as "the ſun, and his raiment was white as the "light." The "Lord our God became ex"ceeding glorious, he was clothed with ma"jeſty and honour, he decked himſelf with "light as it were with a garment."

And

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And if we reflect upon the manner in which it pleaſed the Father to exalt and ennoble the moſt abaſing circumſtances of his life and death, by the choir of angels that deſcended to celebrate his birth; the new ſtar which appeared in the ſkies, guiding the eaſtern ſages to Bethlehem; the voice which anſwered him from heaven, in the audience of the Jews; the preternatural eclipſe of the ſun at his crucifixion; recollecting, at the ſame time, the triumph of his reſurrection, and the manner of his aſcenſion in the preſence of his diſciples; all theſe particulars conſpire to declare the glory not of a ſervant, as Moſes, but of a Son, of "the only begotten;" a glory not of magnificence only, or one beſet with terrors, like that of Sinai, but bearing towards man, in every inſtance, a benign and moſt friendly aſpect; as the ſame bright luminary, which riſes in glorious majeſty upon the earth, gives life, health, and gladneſs to all it's inhabitants. "We beheld his glory, the glory as "of the only begotten of the Father, full of "grace and truth."

In

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In a ubſequent verſe of this chapter, we find "grace and truth" ſet in oppoſition to the Moſaic law. "The law was given by Moſes, "but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt." The law was the diſpenſation of juſtice, auſtere, rigorous, inflexible. "He that doeth "theſe things, ſhall live in them;" and, "Curſed is he that continueth not in all things "that are written in the book of the law, to do "them." The Goſpel is the diſpenſation of mercy, mild, gracious, forgiving, ſaying to the unhappy tranſgreſſor of the law, "Believe "in the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt be ſaved." The law could only make ſin known, and, by conſequence, aggravate it's guilt; the Goſpel can pardon ſin, and aboliſh it's guilt. Such is the contraſt between the moral law and "grace." The ceremonial ſtands oppoſed to "truth," not as being *falſe*, but *figurative*. "The law had a ſhadow of good things to "come; but the body," the ſubſtance, the reality, the truth, pointed at, and delineated by ſuch a ſhadowy repreſentation, "is of "Chriſt." The blood of bulls and goats, for inſtance, was offered, but it could not take away

away ſin; it was never intended ſo to do; it was "a figure for the time then preſent," deſigned to direct the faith of the offerer, to it's correſpondent truth, namely, the blood of Meſſiah, to be afterwards ſhed for that purpoſe. In itſelf, the law was ineffectual, and, of courſe, if reſted in, proved fallacious and deſtructive. DISC. VII.

But the words, as they ſtand in the text, may be taken in a more extended ſenſe, comprehending the whole world, which, at the time of Chriſt's advent, was in a ſtate of *error* and *condemnation*. The two bleſſings, therefore, of which it ſtood moſt eminently in need, were "grace and truth;" grace to deliver it from condemnation, and truth to correct it's errors. Both theſe God by Chriſt did vouchſafe to beſtow upon it. "He hath made us "accepted[a] in the beloved," remitting our ſins, and receiving us to favour. He hath alſo ſhewn us the true and the right way, enabling as well as directing us to walk therein. Grace, without truth, can only mock us; truth, without grace, can only affright us. But

[a] Εχαριτωσεν ημας. Epheſ. i. 6.

when

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when grace hath brought us to him, truth will keep us with him; and through grace we ſhall accompliſh what truth requireth at our hands. "Surely his ſalvation is nigh them that "fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. "Mercy and truth are met together, righte- "ouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other[1]."

With wonder, gratitude, and joy, therefore, let us reflect upon the honour done us by the WORD being MADE FLESH. Our nanature is exalted to the throne of God; there is a MAN in heaven! The diſciples beheld Chriſt's glory in the days of his humiliation; but eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive the glory with which God hath now inveſted "that body which it hath pleaſed "him to make his own; that body wherewith "he hath ſaved the world; that body which "hath been and is the root of eternal life, the "inſtrument wherewith Deity worketh, the "ſacrifice which taketh away ſin, the price

[1] Pſ. lxxxv. 9, 10.

which

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"which hath ranſomed ſouls from death, the "leader of the whole army of bodies that ſhall "riſe again. For though it had a beginning "from us, yet God hath given it vital efficacy. "Heaven hath endowed it with celeſtial "power, that virtue which it hath from above, "in regard whereof, all the angels in heaven "adore it[u]."

And if "no man ever yet hated his own "fleſh," can God hate the fleſh, which, by being taken into one perſon with the WORD, is united to the Godhead? Can the Father hate Him, of whom he more than once declared from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, "in whom I am well pleaſed?"—"And we "are members of HIS body, of HIS fleſh, and "of HIS bones. It is a great myſtery," ſaith "the apoſtle, "but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt "and the church[w]."

When man had offended, he fled from his Maker, and dared no more to approach the

[u] HOOKER, Book v. Sect 54.
[w] Epheſ. v. 30.

divine

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divine preſence. But now that the WORD incarnate hath publiſhed his general invitation —"O thou that heareſt the prayer, unto thee "ſhall all fleſh come!"

If the Son of God, became the Son of man, why ſhould it ſeem a thing incredible, that the ſons of men ſhould become the ſons of God? "Beloved, now are we the ſons of God; and "it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; "but we know, that when Chriſt, who is our "life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear "with him in glory; for we ſhall ſee him as "he is [a]."

Delight we, then, to talk (and, ſince the incarnation of the WORD, why ſhould we not delight to talk?) of the dignity of human nature? Let us be careful to act up to it. To a Chriſtian the advice of the philoſopher comes with redoubled force; "Reverence yourſelf."—— Conſider, to whom you are related, by whom you have been begotten again to a lively hope

[a] 1 John iii. 2.

of

of an unfading inheritance. The ſtock, from which you are ſprung, is noble, it is royal, it is divine. Diſgrace it not by baſe and unworthy actions. Your inheritance is with the ſaints in light; have no fellowſhip with the works of darkneſs. Let your education be ſuitable to your birth, your conduct anſwerable to your expectations [y]. The infirmities and diſhonours, to which mortality is and muſt be ſubject, need not diſcompoſe and afflict you. Be not diſmayed at the approach of pain and ſickneſs; let not the coffin and the ſhroud terrify you. For though "all fleſh be "as graſs, and all the goodlineſs of man as the "flower of graſs;" though "the graſs wither-"eth, the flower fadeth," kindly admoniſhing you to prepare for an autumn and a winter, when the ſpring of youth and the ſummer of manhood ſhall be paſt and gone; yet "the

[y] Utile eſſe civitatibus, dicit Varro, ut ſe viri fortes, etiamſi falſum ſit, Diis genitos eſſe credant, ut eo modo humanus animus velut divinæ ſtirpis fiduciam gerens, res magnas aggrediendas præſumat audacius, et agat vehementius. Auguſtin. de Civit. Dei, lib. iii. p. 49. See Leland, Advant. and Neceſſ. of Rev. i. 182.

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"WORD of God abideth for ever." And this is the WORD, which hath been "made "flesh, and dwelt among us;" this is the WORD to which your nature is in Christ united; "this is the WORD, which by the "Gospel is preached unto you;" whose glory there displayed, "as the glory of the only be-"gotten of the Father," you may now behold; and who, by his "grace" preceding, and his "truth" accompanying, will lead you to a glory, the excellence of which, enjoyment only can enable you to comprehend.

DIS-

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE CASE OF THE JEWS.

JOHN I. 11.

His own received him not.

THAT the eternal Son of God ſhould condeſcend, in human form, to viſit his people, as their Saviour and Redeemer, is an event, which may well be allowed to excite our admiration. But how does our aſtoniſhment riſe, when we are informed, that his people refuſed to receive ſo gracious a viſitant!

The unbeliever, who is continually prying into every corner of ancient and modern hiſtory, for arguments to countenance him in his

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unbelief, ſeizes, we may be ſure, with avidity, on this prominent and marvellous circumſtance, and labours to make his advantage of it; affecting to conclude, that the incredulity of the Jew can only be accounted for, by ſuppoſing a deficiency in the evidence laid before him. And the believer, though ſatisfied that the miſſion of Jeſus ſtands inconteſtibly proved, will yet often find himſelf perplexed, when he reflecteth, how ſtrange an occurrence it is, that a people, ſelected from all others, to be the *peculium* of the Moſt High; by his mighty hand and ſtretched-out arm reſcued from bondage; conducted through all kinds of difficulties and dangers; at length ſettled in a country deſtined for their habitation; and there conſtituted the depoſitaries and guardians of the divine oracles and inſtitutions; that this people ſhould reject and crucify the perſon all along foretold, as we ſay, by thoſe oracles, and pointed out by thoſe inſtitutions.

The truth is, that in all the annals of mankind, and in the whole compaſs of ſpeculation, we meet not with a ſubject of ſo very ſingular

ſingular and extraordinary a nature, as that now before us, namely, the caſe of the Jews. It may be added, that there is none, on every account, more deſerving the deep and attentive conſideration of Chriſtians. Let us, therefore, enquire into the cauſe of the phænomenon, with which they preſent us. Let us hear their plea, and examine the grounds and reaſons, on which it is founded. DISC. VIII.

They did not, becauſe they could not, deny, that the Son of Mary wrought miracles; miracles, though differing in kind, yet equal, in number and magnitude, to thoſe performed by their own great law-giver. Why, then, believing Moſes, did they not believe him? What was it, that could occaſion their infidelity? That which occaſions it at all times, and in all places, when proper evidence is offered, and rejected — The adoption of certain prejudices and prepoſſeſſions, as firſt principles, in oppoſition to which no evidence is to be admitted. Four points were by them taken for granted, from which flowed all their reaſonings, and all their proceedings.

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The points were theſe:

Firſt, That, as the choſen ſeed of Abraham, they had an excluſive indefeaſible right to the favours of Heaven.

Secondly, That the law of Moſes, on account of it's own intrinſic efficacy, and without a view to any thing farther, was ordained for perpetual obſervance.

Thirdly, That the poſſeſſion of their city, temple, and country, in peace, wealth, and proſperity, was the end of the promiſes.

Fourthly, That the prophecies warranted them in the expectation of a Meſſiah, who, as a temporal prince, ſhould ſecure them in ſuch poſſeſſion, by ſubduing their civil enemies, and reigning over them, in Judea.

If theſe things were ſo, they had much, indeed, to ſay for themſelves. But let us ſee, whether

whether there be not, in their own Scriptures, evidence ſufficient to ſet theſe poſitions aſide, and to condemn thoſe men, who, upon the ſtrength of them, rejected and crucified Jeſus of Nazareth.

Their *firſt* poſition was, that, as the choſen ſeed of Abraham, they had an excluſive and indefeaſible right to the favours of Heaven.

For thus, in reading the goſpel hiſtory, we find them continually priding themſelves in their deſcent from Abraham; as if, in order to their acceptance with God, nothing were required, but a proof of their relation to that patriarch; and as if, while that relation ſubſiſted, no miſconduct of their own could occaſion them, as a nation, to forfeit ſuch acceptance. When our Lord ſpake to them concerning that liberty wherewith he came to make them free, they, miſtaking ſpiritual for civil liberty, confidently and roundly replied, "We are Abraham's ſeed, and were never in "bondage to any man[a];" unaccountably for-

[a] John viii. 33.

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getting, as it ſhould ſeem, what they had formerly ſuffered in Egypt and Babylon, and the ſtate in which they lived, at that very time, under the Roman power. The mention of Heaven's mercy being extended to the Gentiles, always put them beſide themſelves. Chriſt only hinted the caſe of Elijah healing Naaman the *Syrian*, and that of Eliſha being ſent to a widow of *Sarepta*[b], leaving the application to themſelves. They underſtood him, and endeavoured inſtantly to deſtroy him. St. Paul, relating the ſtory of his converſion, was patiently heard, till he touched upon the circumſtance of his miſſion to the Gentiles. "They gave him audience to this word, and "then lifted up their voices, and ſaid, Away "with ſuch a fellow from the earth, for it is "not fit that he ſhould live[c]!"

Now this notion was taken up, in direct oppoſition to their own Scriptures.

For they neglected to obſerve, what it was very obvious for any one to obſerve, who read

[b] Luke iv. 27. [c] Acts xxii. 22.

the

the Scriptures, that Abraham himſelf was not choſen and bleſſed, merely as Abraham the ſon of Terah; but as a ſervant of God, tried in various ways, and, in all, found faithful and obedient. They ſhould, therefore, have reflected, that his deſcendants, of courſe, ſtood on the ſame foot, and would not be accounted the children of Abraham, when they ceaſed to do the works of Abraham [d].

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The ſame leſſon might have been learned from that part of the ſacred hiſtory, which records the rejection of Iſhmael the eldeſt ſon of Abraham; and, afterward, of Eſau the firſt born of Iſaac. Theſe tranſactions evinced, that no dependence could be placed on the incident of being the ſeed of Abraham; ſince, of that ſeed, for certain reaſons, ſome have been rejected, while others were accepted. So it had been formerly; and therefore, in parallel circumſtances, ſo it might be again.

Remarkable, to this purpoſe, was the caſe of their anceſtors, who came out of Egypt. A

[d] See John viii. 39.

promiſe

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The light of God's countenance was frequently withdrawn from the Iſraelites, when they ſinned, and again reſtored, upon their repentance. Other qualifications were therefore requiſite, without which, it little availed them to be of the houſe and lineage of Abraham.

It ſhould have been recollected by the Jews, that the grand and capital promiſe made to Abraham was not limited to his natural poſterity, but, on the contrary, in the moſt expreſs terms that language could afford, extended to all others. It was the promiſe of the Seed, that is, the Meſſiah, in whom, not Iſrael only according to the fleſh, but

"ALL

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"ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH should "be bleſſed[s]." And for this reaſon, the pro- "miſe was made, previous to the covenant of circumciſion, under which the Jews claimed. In the ſtate of uncircumciſion "Abraham be- "lieved God, and it was counted unto him "for righteouſneſs;" plainly becoming thereby the father of them who ſhould afterward believe like him, though not circumciſed; that is to ſay, the father of the Gentiles, or "na- "tions of the earth," one day to "be bleſſed," in the promiſed Seed, or Meſſiah.

The Jews truſted in Moſes. Wherefore, then, did they not hear Moſes, and attend to what he had ſaid to them? In the plaineſt words he had told them, 1500 years before, what at length appeared to St. Peter, who, for ſome time, had the prejudices of a Jew about him; "that God did not reſpect perſons[t]"— he had told them, that if they rebelled againſt their God, they ſhould "be puniſhed, as "*ſtrangers* were puniſhed; and as the *na-*

[s] Gen. xii. 3. [t] Deut. x. 17. See Acts x. 34.

"*tions*,

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"*tions*, ſo ſhould they periſh[a]." Nay, he had clearly predicted, that the days would come, when upon their rejection for their abominable iniquities, the Gentiles ſhould be taken in their room, to "provoke them to jealouſy[b]." Before the time of Moſes, their progenitor Jacob had declared, that whenever Shiloh ſhould come, "the nations would be gathered "to him[c]." How very bold and explicit Iſaiah continually is upon this topic of light, life, and ſalvation to be manifeſted, through Meſſiah, to the Gentiles, is well known. Malachi was the laſt of their prophets. He lived within 400 years of the appearance of Jeſus. What a prophecy did he leave upon the ſubject, penned, as it were, with a ſun-beam— "I have no pleaſure in you, ſaith the Lord of "Hoſts, neither will I accept an offering at "your hand: for from the riſing of the ſun "unto the going down of the ſame, my name "ſhall be great among the *Gentiles*, and in "every place incenſe ſhall be offered unto my "name, and a pure offering: for my name

[a] Deut. vii. 19. 20. [b] Deut. xxxii. 20. 21.
[c] Gen. xlix. 10.

"ſhall

"ſhall be great among the *Heathen*, ſaith the "Lord of Hoſts[k]." DISC. VIII.

Such are the documents and the warnings, contained in the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, againſt the firſt tenet of the Jews, that, as the choſen ſeed of Abraham, they had an excluſive and indefeaſible right to the favours of Heaven. Yet, with theſe Scriptures in their hands, in their heads, in their mouths, and upon their phylacteries, boaſting and glorying, upon every occaſion, in an exact and accurate knowlege of them, did thoſe men, after having crucified Jeſus, perſecute his apoſtles unto the death, from city to city, becauſe the Gentiles were invited to ſhare the benefits and bleſſings of the Goſpel.—Such is the force of prejudice! Such the illuſion of ſelf-love!

Proceed we to conſider their *ſecond* poſition, namely, that the law of Moſes, on account of it's own intrinſic efficacy, and without a view to any thing farther, was ordained for perpetual obſervance.

[k] Mal. i. 10, 11.

It

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It was by no means ſafe, before an audience of Jews, to hint, though ever ſo remotely, at the inefficacy of the Moſaic rites conſidered in themſelves to procure the divine favour; or to inſinuate, though ever ſo covertly, the termination and abolition of that ſyſtem. Some of the "blaſphemous words," charged upon the protomartyr St. Stephen, and for which he was ſtoned, were theſe; "that "Jeſus of Nazareth ſhould change the cuſ-"toms, or rites, which Moſes delivered[1]." In their ears, this was the worſt of blaſphemies. It does not appear, that Stephen had uſed ſuch an expreſſion; it is probable, at that ſeaſon, he was more guarded; and they, who depoſed their teſtimony againſt him, are ſtyled "falſe witneſſes." By urging ſome phrophecy, or parallel, from the Old Teſtament, as he afterwards urged ſeveral in his apology, it is likely he had intimated as much; and the words themſelves, with which he ſtands charged, contain nothing more than the truth, ſufficiently atteſted by the law itſelf; which all along carried in it the moſt plenary and abundant evidence of it's own preſent inefficacy,

[1] Acts vi. 13, 14.

and

and future diſſolution; as they, who prided themſelves in the ſtudy and interpretation of it, ought to have known. DISC. VIII.

For, upon the firſt view of the law—Let us, for a moment, ſuppoſe, with the Jew, that the legal ceremonies, in themſelves, without having reſpect to any thing above and beyond them, were indeed effective of the purpoſes, for which they were ſaid to be deſigned.—To what ſtrange concluſions ſhall we be led? We muſt conclude, that the death of a beaſt could render the Deity propitious to the offerer; that a goat could carry the tranſgreſſions of a congregation into the wilderneſs; that the blood of bulls could atone for ſin; that water, with the aſhes of a red heifer infuſed in it, could purge away the pollutions of the mind; and the like. But againſt ſuch concluſions common ſenſe exclaims aloud, and forces us to draw another, and the only juſt and proper inference, namely, that ſuch rites derived their virtue not from themſelves, but from perſons and actions repreſented by them; that they were a figure for the time being; a ſhadow exhibiting to the faith of the pious

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pious and intelligent votary the ſhape and lineaments of a ſubſtance, which did not appear. This muſt ever be the caſe of external ceremonies in religion; and we ourſelves ſhould be in a ſituation ſimilar to that of the Jew, if blindly and ignorantly adhering to the letter of our own ſacraments, excluſive of the things they ſignify, and the diſpoſitions they require, we ſhould ſuppoſe a power inherent in the baptiſmal water, to waſh away guilt, and in the euchariſtic elements, to confer pardon and peace.

Again. Be pleaſed to obſerve the oppoſite character given, at different times, of the ſame rites. One while it is ſaid, that they were highly acceptable to God; that he was delighted with the ſavour of the ſacrifices, and well pleaſed, as it is natural to ſuppoſe he ſhould be, with the obſervance of his own inſtitutions. At other times, we hear him declaring, with indignation, that his ſoul was weary with offerings, and hated the appointed feaſts; that he could not away with the new moons and ſabbaths; that incenſe was an abomination to him; and, in a word, that he would

would not eat the fleſh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats. Now, if we take the law and it's rites to have been the things really and ultimately deſigned, as in themſelves excellent and efficacious, they would have been always pleaſing to God, like duties intrinſically good and virtuous, of which we never hear the Almighty ſpeaking, as he doth of theſe ſacrifices and oblations. But if the legal rites were figurative; if they were ſymbolical of internal diſpoſitions and actions: then would they neceſſarily become pleaſing and diſpleaſing to God, in different reſpects: pleaſing, when accompanied by ſuch internal diſpoſitions and actions; when disjoined from them, and reſted in as meritorious, to the laſt degree diſpleaſing, hateful, and abominable. They are ſaid to have been both the one and the other; and, therefore, were moſt indubitably figurative. To any conſidering perſon the thing ſpeaks for itſelf. DISC. VIII.

But the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament did not leave a truth of ſuch importance to be inferred. They have expreſsly declared it.

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To inſtance in that rite, which was the diſcriminating and characteriſtic mark of the ſeed of Abraham, circumciſion. Moſes himſelf hath affirmed, that a ſpiritual or mental circumciſion was intended; and that the end of that commandment was the love of God, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. "Circumciſe (ſays he) the foreſkin of your "hearts, and be no more ſtiff-necked [m]." And again, "The Lord thy God ſhall circumciſe "thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love "the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and "with all thy ſoul, that thou mayeſt live [n]." When a Jew, reading this, ſtill continues to think, that the legal rites were inſtituted for their own ſake, and that their value lies in the *opus operatum*, is the veil on Moſes' face, or on his heart? For hath not Moſes told *him*, in terms as plain as thoſe in which St. Paul hath told *us*, that "He is not a Jew, who "is one outwardly, nor is that circumciſion, "which is outward in the fleſh: but he is a "Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumci-"ſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and "not in the letter; whoſe praiſe is not of men, "but of God [o]."

[m] Deut. x. 16. [n] Deut. xxx. 6. [o] Rom. ii. ult.

Thus,

Thus, with regard to the many ablutions enjoined and practiſed under the law—"Waſh ye, make ye clean," ſaith God to his people, by the prophet Iſaiah. So far the terms are legal, and may be deemed ambiguous: but by what immediately follows, their meaning is explained and fixed: "Put away the evil "of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe "to do evil, learn to do well[p]." As if he had ſaid, what avails the outward and viſible ſign, without the thing ſignified by it? When we read in the 51ſt Pſalm, "Purge me with "hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean; waſh me, and "I ſhall be whiter than ſnow[q];" we may think we hear the voice of a Jew. But let us hear him again—"Waſh me thoroughly from "mine iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin. "Hide thy face from my ſins, and blot out "all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean "heart, O God; and renew a right ſpirit "within me. Caſt me not away from thy pre-"ſence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from "me. Reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalva-"tion, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.[r]"

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[p] Iſai. i. 16. 17. [q] Pſ. li. 7. [r] Ver. 2, 9, et ſeq.

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What can a Chriſtian—what can the devouteſt and beſt informed Chriſtian, in the like unhappy circumſtances, ſay more, than thus to pray, that God would by his mercy pardon the guilt, and efface the ſtain of ſin, and renew the heart and ſoul again to righteouſneſs, by the grace and power of his Holy Spirit? And whoever peruſes with attention the writings of the prophets, will find, that it is always one part of their employment, to recall the Iſraelites from the dead letter to the living ſpirit of their law; to preſs upon them the neceſſity of ſuing for the divine favour by that true repentance, and that ſtedfaſt faith in God's promiſes, in the exerciſe of which it was the deſign of their ritual to train them. The office of a Chriſtian miniſter, *mutatis mutandis*, is, in this particular, the ſame; and it may be executed, with the utmoſt propriety, in the very ſame language. The noble and affecting exhortation in our Commination office affords a ſtriking proof of this; where the prophetical and the evangelical expreſſions are finely interwoven, and, like the colours in a good picture, moſt harmoniouſly melt into each other.

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To ſpeak a word more, touching the *perpetuity* of the law of Moſes. The Jew argues for it, from the immutability of God. But it is no more a reflection upon the divine immutability, that the law, having anſwered it's end, ſhould be aboliſhed, than it is, that the world ſhould be deſtroyed, after the accompliſhment of the deſign, for which it was created. He, who gave the law, foretold, in the cleareſt terms, by his prophets, that, at a certain period, it ſhould ceaſe; that he would make a new covenant by the Meſſias, and that the old covenant ſhould be diſannulled[t]; that the old things ſhould paſs away, and be forgotten[u]; that the ark of the covenant ſhould come no more to mind[w]; that the legal ſacrifices ſhould ceaſe, and ſacrifices of a purer kind be eſtabliſhed in their room[x]; that the Aronical order of prieſthood ſhould be diſſolved, and the order of Melchiſedek be introduced by the Meſſiah; and that this latter prieſthood ſhould be an ordinance for ever[y].

[t] Jer. xxxi. 31. [u] Iſai. xliii. 18, 19.
[w] Jer. iii. 16. [x] Mal. i. 10.
[y] Pſ. cx. 4. See PASCHAL's Thoughts, p. 187.

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From theſe conſiderations it appears, that the law, in it's nature, was figurative and tranſitory, being a diſpenſation interpoſed between the promiſe and it's accompliſhment. Previous to the law, the Goſpel was preached to Abraham, that in his ſeed, the Meſſiah, all nations ſhould be bleſſed. The ſame Goſpel, at the beginning, had been preached to Adam, that the ſeed of the woman, or the Meſſiah, ſhould bruiſe the head, that is, deſtroy the power, of the old ſerpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived our firſt parents, and deceiveth the whole world. But as there was to be a long interval between the promiſe and it's performance, in the mean time, till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made, the law took men under it's tuition, preſcribed to them their duty, ſhewed them their guilt, and their pollution, and pointed out the means of pardon and ſanctification. When the promiſe was fulfilled, and the ſeed came, it had executed it's office, and ceaſed of courſe, giving place to him, whom it had hitherto prefigured and predicted. It ſpoke by the mouth of the aged

and

and dying Simeon, when, upon embracing the child Jeſus in the temple, he exclaimed, "Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in "peace, according to thy word; for mine "eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, which thou "haſt prepared before the face of all people; "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be "the glory of thy people Iſrael." DISC. VIII.

The *third* point, taken for granted by the Jews in our Saviour's time, was, that the poſſeſſion of their city, temple, and country, in peace, wealth, and proſperity, was the end of the promiſes.

But their own Scriptures militate, with equal force, againſt this notion likewiſe.

For here we muſt recollect again, that *the* promiſe, emphatically ſo ſtyled, was made, in Abraham, to "all the nations of the earth," who could not poſſibly have any concern in the bleſſing of Canaan.

We muſt obſerve, that if Canaan were indeed

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When the children of Abraham were ſettled in Canaan, true Iſraelites underſtood, that the reſt they there enjoyed was by no means the real, permanent, final reſt, promiſed and intended. In the xcv^th^ Pſalm, David, though king of Iſrael, and ſeated on the hill of Sion, ſtill ſpeaks of another future reſt, warning the people of his time, that they fell not ſhort of it, as their anceſtors, who came out of Egypt, fell ſhort of Canaan, through unbelief and diſobedience. If Joſhua had given them the true final reſt, David ſo long afterward could not

not have ſpoken of another day of trial, and another reſt reſerved in ſtore for the faithful. For this reaſon it is, that the ſame David, in that ſublime and devout act of praiſe and thankſgiving uttered juſt before his death, recognizing the mercies of God to Iſrael in the Land of Promiſe, yet makes the very confeſſion which the ancient patriarchs had made, when they had none inheritance in that land. "We are ſtrangers before thee, our God, "and ſojourners, as were all our fathers: our "days on the earth are as a ſhadow, and there "is none abiding[a]."

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If, therefore, the land of Canaan were not the true and final ſeat of reſt, peace, and felicity for the people of God, we muſt conclude concerning that, as we did above concerning the law, that it terminated not in itſelf, nor was given for it's own ſake, but was alſo, in it's kind, a figure for the time then preſent, of a glorious and permanent poſſeſſion in a better world, where all thoſe, who live and die in the Lord, ſhall indeed reſt from

[a] 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

their

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their labours. The Jews had ſufficient grounds, from their own Scriptures, to conſider it as ſuch. They ſhould have conſidered it as ſuch; and they ſhould have carried on their thoughts to the reſt and the inheritance of the ſaints in light, whither their fathers were gone before them through faith in the promiſed ſeed, the Meſſiah, whoſe office it was, like another Joſhua, by vanquiſhing the adverſe powers, to open the kingdom of heaven, that true land of Promiſe, to all believers.

The *fourth* poſition maintained by the Jews was, that the prophecies warranted them in the expectation of a Meſſiah, who, as a temporal prince, ſhould ſecure them in their poſſeſſions, by ſubduing their civil enemies, and reigning over them in Judea.

The ſame prejudice which operated with regard to the family of Abraham, the law of Moſes, and the land of Promiſe, operated likewiſe with regard to the Meſſiah. This was but a natural and neceſſary conſequence. For if they had fixed their thoughts on their national privileges, their ceremonies, and the inheritance

inheritance of Canaan, the Meſſiah, by them deſired, muſt needs be one, who would defend and preſerve them in the enjoyment of thoſe privileges, thoſe ceremonies, and that inheritance. Accordingly, the notion current among the Jews, when our Lord was upon earth, and which, we find, ſtuck faſt to his diſciples even after his reſurrection, was, that Meſſiah, when he came, ſhould reſtore again "the kingdom to Iſrael [a]." And the grand argument inſiſted on in the Talmud, and by the Rabbins, is, that he did not ſubdue the nations by the force and terror of his arms. He overcame not the Gentiles, ſay they, with martial power; he loaded us not with their ſpoils: he neither enlarged our dominion, nor increaſed our power [b].

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Now the Scriptures do undoubtedly deſcribe Meſſiah, as one, who ſhould deliver his people from their enemies, and reign over them in glorious majeſty. The Jews conſtrued thoſe paſſages of a temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and a temporal reign in

[a] Acts i. 6. [b] See PASCHAL, p. 170.

Paleſtine

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Paleſtine. But did they conſtrue them aright? Do not the ſame Scriptures unfold the deſign of his coming, and the proceſs of the redemption by him, in the fulleſt and moſt particular manner? Surely they do. How many paſſages are there, always allowed by the ancient, and not now denied by the modern Jews, to belong to Meſſiah, which deſcribe him as poor, lowly, deſpiſed, afflicted, oppreſſed, dying, dead! Would you now compoſe a man's character, without accounting for the contrarieties in it? Can you be ſaid to have compoſed that of the Meſſiah, while you leave out one half of it? Are you not bound to find a perſon, in whom all the ſeemingly contradictory particulars are reconciled? They are eaſily, they are completely reconciled in the perſon of Jeſus, as ſet forth, by us Chriſtians, in his twofold nature, as God and man. They never were, they never will, they never can be reconciled in any other: and the Jews, by their modern fiction of two different Meſſiahs, to anſwer the purpoſe, have at once juſtified us, and given ſentence againſt themſelves.

But

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But that the force of the prophetical teſtimony in favour of the Meſſiahſhip of Jeſus may appear at one view, permit me, in a conciſe and ſummary way, to recall the ſeveral particulars of it to your remembrance, as I find them collected by a very learned and eminent writer.

The prophets ſpeak of a new and ſecond covenant, which God would make with his people: they mention, not once or twice, but very often, the converſion of the Gentiles from ſuperſtition and idolatry, to the worſhip of the true God: they ſpeak of four ſucceſſive empires, the laſt of which was the Roman empire; and under this laſt empire, they ſay, that a new and everlaſting kingdom ſhould be eſtabliſhed, by one to whom God ſhould give abſolute power and dominion. A great perſon was to come, who ſhould be Immanuel, or God with us, the Son of God, and the Son of man, the ſeed of Abraham and of David; born of a virgin, poor and obſcure, and yet one whom David calls his Lord; the Lord to whom the temple belonged, the mighty God, a great king, and everlaſting prieſt, though not

of

DISC. VIII. of the tribe of Levi; born at Bethlehem; a prophet like unto Moſes, but greater than Moſes; a prophet who ſhould preach to the poor and meek, and proclaim liberty to the captives, and comfort to the mourners, and heal the broken hearted; who ſhould proclaim his Goſpel, firſt and principally, in the land of Zebulon and Naphthali, in Galilee of the Gentiles; who ſhould have a forerunner in the ſpirit of Elias, crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; who ſhould inſtruct in a mild and peaceable manner, without wrath and contention, before the deſtruction of the temple, in which temple he ſhould be ſeen and heard; who ſhould enter into Jeruſalem meek and humble, and riding on an aſs; who ſhould work miracles more than Moſes and all the prophets, and miracles of the merciful and beneficent kind, open the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, and make the dumb to praiſe God, and the lame to leap as an hart; who, notwithſtanding all his power and goodneſs, ſhould be rejected by the greater part of the nation, to whom he ſhould be a ſtumbling-block; who ſhould be deſpiſed and afflicted, a man

of

of ſorrow, and cut off from the land of the living; who ſhould have enemies numerous, powerful, crafty and wicked; who ſhould be accuſed by falſe witneſſes, betrayed by an intimate and particular friend, ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver, and the money given for a potter's field, when it had been flung away by the traitor, who ſhould not live long after his crime, and whoſe office ſhould be filled up by another: that the enemies of this bleſſed perſon ſhould uſe him contumeliouſly, buffet him, and ſpit upon him, while he ſhould be led like a lamb to the ſlaughter, not opening his mouth, but to intercede for the tranſgreſſors; that his enemies ſhould ſtrip him of his raiment, divide it among themſelves, and caſt lots upon it, ſurround him, pierce his hands and his feet, mock him, and ſhake their heads at him, give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink; that he ſhould be reduced to ſo weak and languiſhing a condition, that his bones might all be counted, his heart ſhould melt within him, and his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth; that he ſhould be brought to the duſt of death; that

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that he ſhould be pierced, and yet not one of his bones be broken; that he ſhould be laid in the ſepulchre of a rich and honourable man, none of his enemies hindering it; that he ſhould riſe again, before he had ſeen corruption, and ſubdue his enemies, and aſcend into heaven, and ſit at God's right hand, and be crowned with honour and glory, and ſee his ſeed, and proſper, and juſtify many, and be adored by kings and princes; that then Jeruſalem ſhould be made deſolate, and the Jews diſperſed in all lands, and the Gentiles ſhould be converted, and flow into the church [c].

In the application of a ſingle prophecy, eſpecially if it be a figurative one, intereſt and ingenuity may raiſe many doubts and difficulties; but againſt the accumulated weight of evidence, καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην, afforded by ſo many plain literal predictions, all pointing to one perſon, all punctually and exactly fulfilled in Jeſus Chriſt, and in him alone, no

[c] Dr. JORTIN's Remarks on Eccleſ. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 112.

tolerably

tolerably plauſible objection can ever be made. Let candour and integrity, reaſon and common ſenſe be judges in the cauſe, and they muſt determine—they have already determined by the virtuous Nathanael—"Rabbi, "thou art the Son of God, thou art the king "of Iſrael." DISC. VIII.

Such, then, is the caſe of the Jews, ſuch the evidence they rejected, and ſuch the cauſe of their rejecting it. Having fixed their eyes and their hopes upon the ſhadow, they ſet at nought the ſubſtance, though appearing at the time and in the manner deſcribed by their own prophets. Having rejected their God, they have been rejected by him; and the fatal errors, which occaſioned their infidelity, have received a final and tremendous refutation, by the divine judgments inflicted upon them.

To demonſtrate, that, as the ſeed of Abraham, they had no excluſive and indefeaſible right to the favours of heaven, thoſe favours

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have been withdrawn from them, and conferred on the Gentiles.

To ſhew that the law of Moſes was not in itſelf efficacious, or deſigned to be perpetual, they are put under an abſolute incapacity of obſerving it any more. They have no altar, no prieſt, no temple.

To reprove the fond notion, that Canaan was the end of the promiſes, they have been driven out of it, and forbidden to approach it. In a ſtate of utter deſolation, it has paſſed ſucceſſively into the hands of their enemies of every denomination, and never reverted to them.

To eradicate the ideas of a temporal Meſſiah, and dominion over the nations, after beholding the ſceptre departed from Judah, after having been deceived by a multitude of impoſtors, they continue to this hour, at the end of 1700 years, fugitives and vagabonds upon the earth.

And now, let us be permitted, in our turn, to addreſs an argument to the deiſt, upon this topic.

topic. You demand ocular proof of prophecy accompliſhed. It is before you, in an inſtance without a parallel. It was repeatedly foretold, both in the Old and New Teſtament, that, for the rejection and murder of their Meſſiah, the Jews ſhould be diſperſed into all countries; yet that they ſhould not be ſwallowed up and loſt among their conquerors, but ſhould ſtill ſubſiſt, to lateſt times, a diſtinct people. By Jeremiah, God declared he would make an end of the nations their oppreſſors, but he would not make an end of them[d]. You will not ſay, this prediction was written ſince the event; and certainly, an occurrence more ſingular, or improbable, could not have been predicted. In the courſe of human affairs, who hath heard ſuch a thing? who hath ſeen ſuch a thing? Yet, ſo it is. The mighty monarchies of Aſſyria, Perſia, Greece, and Rome, are vaniſhed, like the ſhadows of the evening, or the phantoms of the night. Their places know them no more. Nothing remains of them, but their names: while this little contemptible people, as you are wont to ſtyle the Jews, ſtrangely ſecure,

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[d] Jer. xxx. 11.

DISC. VIII. without a friend or protector, amidſt the wreck of empires; oppreſſed, perſecuted, harraſſed always, by edicts and executioners, by murders and maſſacres, hath outlived the very ruins of them all. Except you ſee ſigns and wonders, you will not believe. Behold then a ſign and a wonder, the accompliſhment of prophecy in a ſtanding miracle; the *buſh of Moſes* ſurrounded by flames, ever burning, and never conſumed! Contemplate the ſight as it deſerves; and be not faithleſs, but believing; for this is the Lord's doing, and therefore ſo marvellous in our eyes.

That the Goſpel, when ſlighted by the Jews, might not be without it's fruit, and that God might have a church and people to ſupply their place, the Apoſtles turned to the Gentiles; ſo that *their* fall became the riches of the world, and good was brought out of evil. Let the warning, given us by our own Apoſtle, be ever ſounding in our ears, though, when we conſider the ſtate of religion among us, it may perhaps make them tingle. "Becauſe "of unbelief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt

"ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high minded, but "fear; for if God ſpared not the natural "branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not "thee[*]." DISC. VIII.

The cauſe of Jewiſh infidelity was an hatred of the power of godlineſs, concealed under the cloke of zeal for it's form, and occaſioned by a love of wealth, power, and parade, a notion of privilege, pre-eminence, and indefectibility. And is it not aſtoniſhing, that, with ſuch an example before her eyes, the church of Rome ſhould be purſuing the ſame courſe, and ſplitting upon the ſame rock? Let us be thankful, that we are come out of her; and let us guard againſt the ſhadow of her crime, by conſtantly bearing in mind, that the promiſes are ſpiritual, and that they are conditional; that if the light of the Goſpel, which is vouchſafed us, be abuſed, God can remove it; that, like the bright ruler of the day, it may proceed weſtward, and leave us in darkneſs; that he who converted Britons and Saxons, can call the tribes of America to the

[*] Rom. xi. 20, 21.

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faith, and "thoſe ſtones raiſe up children unto "Abraham."

To conclude — When we ſee the Jews, for ſo great a length of time, preſerved under calamities, which would have been long ſince the ruin of any other people, our regard and attention ought to be ſtrongly excited towards them. Extraordinary was their beginning, and their progreſs: more extraordinary, perhaps, will be their end; for if they abide not ſtill in unbelief, they, as the natural branches, *may* ſurely be grafted in again: and there can be little doubt, but that ſuch an event *will* take place. It is ſaid, they are diſperſed, "till the times of the "Gentiles ſhall be fulfilled[t];" and that "blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until "the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in[u]." It ſeems evidently to be implied, that at the period mentioned, whenever it ſhall come, their diſperſion will ceaſe, and their blindneſs be removed. Glorious things are ſpoken of them

[t] Luke xxi. 24. [u] Rom. xi. 25.

by

by their own prophets, which do not ſeem, as yet, to have received their full and proper accompliſhment. When the Gentiles had revolted from the true religion, revealed after the fall, the church ſubſiſted for two thouſand years, in the family of Abraham. Since the apoſtaſy of the Jews, it hath ſubſiſted nearly the ſame ſpace of time among the Gentiles. And what ſaith St. Paul? "As "ye in times paſt have not believed God, yet "have now obtained mercy through their "unbelief; even ſo have theſe alſo now not "believed, that through your mercy they "alſo may obtain mercy [h]." The very mercy ſhewn to the Gentiles is to be a means of bringing the Jews to the faith: and perhaps we can no where meet with an inſtance of a more popular and affectionate turn, than that, by which St. Paul ſeems to find a reaſon for his zeal to convert the Gentiles, in his love to his own countrymen the Jews, that he may thereby provoke them to emulation. Let us ſecond his endeavours to effect this, by our

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[h] Rom. xi. 30, 31.

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love and our good works: let us, in our lives and converſations, ſhew them a religion, whoſe attractive excellence may invite and compel them to embrace it. Nor let us omit to obſerve, that, as Gentiles, while we labour to promote their intereſt, we likewiſe ſhall, by ſo doing, promote our own. So ſignal an event, as the converſion of the Jews, cannot but operate again on the lukewarm and degenerate nations, as well as on thoſe that are ſtill unconverted, to the production of a more plentiful and joyful harveſt, than has yet perhaps been ſeen. "For if the fall of them "were the riches of the world, and the dimi-"niſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles; "how much more their fulneſs? If the "caſting away of them were the reconciling "of the world, what ſhall the receiving of "them be, but life from the dead [1]?" The reſurrection of Chriſtianity, in all the ſplendor of truth, and the beauty of holineſs!—Nor let us be ſtaggered by the contrary appearances of things in the world. Theſe cannot

[1] Rom. xi. 12, 15.

be

be more contrary at the converſion of the Jews, than they were at the converſion of the Gentiles. From the Jewiſh church, when in it's loweſt and moſt unpromiſing ſtate, went forth thoſe, who brought the nations to the faith; from the Gentile church, when in a condition equally low and unpromiſing, may go forth thoſe, who ſhall cauſe Iſrael to return to it—Bleſſed times; Delightful proſpect!—We ſee it, but not now; we behold it, but, perhaps, not near. We live, and probably, like the ancient patriarchs, we may die, not having received the promiſes. But a generation to be born ſhall receive them, and ſhall praiſe the Lord, who thus, at different periods, "hath "ſhut up all in unbelief, that he may" finally "have mercy upon all."—Happy, in the mean ſeaſon, ſhall we be, if, while we are preparing ourſelves, we may, in any the leaſt degree, by our prayers and our endeavours, contribute towards the preparation of our elder brethren, the once beloved and highly favoured ſeed of Abraham, for the approach of that awful and important day, when their and our Meſ- DISC. VIII.

ſiah,

DISC. VIII. fiah, who, as at this time, came in humility, to abaſe the proud, ſhall return in glory, to exalt the humble.

DIS-

DISCOURSE IX.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

JOHN XXI. 7.

That Disciple whom Jesus loved.

NO writings are better calculated to improve mankind, than those which relate the history of the lives of such persons as have been famous, in their generations, for wisdom and virtue. We are apt to be terrified by the strictness and severity of holiness, while it meets us only in precept; but when we behold it realized in the example of one, made of the same flesh and blood, living in the same world, and exposed to the same temptations with ourselves, we are fired, at the sight, with a noble emulation, and are ashamed of any longer fancying ourselves not able to do what so many others have done before us. St. Augustine, in his confessions, describing

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ſcribing the conflicts he endured with temptation in his younger years, tells us, how greatly he was ſtrengthened, and animated to the fight, by imagining he ſaw virtue ſtanding, in a viſible form, before his eyes, and pointing to the noble company of thoſe who had been conſpicuous examples of purity; with which conſideration ſhe gently reproached him in theſe words—"Why canſt not thou do what *theſe* have done?" From the fair light of one good example innumerable others may catch the heavenly flame, until the whole church become illuminated and adorned with bright and ſhining patterns of every thing that is lovely and praiſe-worthy.

Biography hath also another advantage, namely, that it is ſure to *entertain*, becauſe it gratifies that natural curioſity men have to be acquainted with the hiſtory of others; which curioſity is then directed to it's proper end, when it incites us to make the wiſdom and experience of paſt ages our own, in order to become proficients in the myſtery of godlineſs, and to practiſe every art of virtuous living.

But

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But what chiefly recommends this kind of writing to Chriſtians is, the uſe made of it in the Holy Scriptures, which are, for the moſt part, *hiſtorical*, the wiſdom of God having thought it better to ſet before us the duties of our calling, as they preſent themſelves in the life of Chriſt and thoſe of his ſaints, than to give us any regular and exact ſyſtem of them. The church, by the appointment of her feſtivals, hath contrived to turn our thoughts from time to time upon theſe lives, that ſo, neglect and forgetfulneſs may not deprive us of the many benefits reſulting from a due contemplation of them.

The ſaint of this day is John the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt. And where will heraldry, among all her boaſted titles of honour, find one that can ſtand in competition with that which was conferred upon him — "The diſciple whom Jeſus loved!" Beloved of Him who was himſelf the beloved of his Father! Could we ſuppoſe a prince to reign univerſal monarch over all the kingdoms of the world, the ſole fountain of every kind of earthly honour to every individual man under the whole heavens, how

DISC. IX. how gladly, at the hour of death, would he reſign all, to be the beloved diſciple of ſuch a Maſter? And if nothing be eſteemed too high a price for the favour of an earthly ſovereign, a man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, what ſhall we not give to obtain the love of him who abideth for ever, and will make us partakers of his own immortality? We are all the diſciples of Chriſt, and candidates for his favour. Let us, therefore, take a view of the life and character of the perſon who enjoyed ſo large a ſhare of it, as to be ſtyled eminently—"that diſciple whom Jeſus loved;" ſince, to be like him, is the way to be loved of our Maſter as he was.

St. John was the ſon of Zebedee and Salome; the ſame Salome whoſe pious care had provided ſpices to embalm the body of our Lord, when Mary Magdalen and ſhe, coming early to the ſepulchre, found him riſen from the dead. The place of his birth was one of the ſea-towns in Galilee, probably either Bethſaida or Capernaum, where, with his father Zebedee, and his elder brother James, afterwards diſtinguiſhed from another of that name by the title

of

of *St. James the Great*, he followed the fiſhing trade. Youth is no obſtacle in the way of obtaining the favour of Chriſt. The diſciple whom he loved was the youngeſt of all the Apoſtles. And certain it is, that religion never appears to greater advantage, than in the perſons of thoſe who "remember their Creator in the days of their youth," and are admitted early into the number of the diſciples of the holy Jeſus. It is then like a diamond ſet in gold. There is ſomething more noble in renouncing the world for the love of Chriſt, when the reliſh for ſenſible enjoyments is at the higheſt, than there can be in doing it when the evil days come, in which there is no farther pleaſure or ſatisfaction to be had in earthly things. He ſurely is not ſo likely to accompliſh his journey, who begins it when the ſun is going down, as he is, who ſets out at the hour of it's riſing. Youth, like the morning, is the proper ſeaſon for every taſk that requires time and pains. Then all the powers of body and ſoul are freſh and vigorous, as thoſe of one awaked from a ſound and kindly ſleep. Then is the golden opportunity, the ſweet hour of

DISC. IX.

DISC. IX. of prime, and the day is before us. "The "night cometh, when no man can work. I "have written unto you, young men (ſaith John "himſelf), becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word "of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome "the wicked one[a]." Rejoice then, O young man, in thy youth, not becauſe thou art able to riot in exceſs and wantonneſs, as the heathen who know not God, but becauſe thou haſt it in thy power to to become, like the youthful John, the beloved of thy Maſter, who ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.

Nor let him of low degree neglect to take comfort in the conſideration, that the beloved diſciple of Chriſt was a common *fiſherman*. The diſtinctions of high and low, rich and poor, noble and vulgar, obtain in this world, and in this world only. In the kingdom of God they ceaſe, and are no more. Their virtue only gives precedence, and the meaneſt mechanic takes place of the nobles and kings of the earth, if he were a better Chriſtian than they were. The vanity and the folly of

[a] 1 John ii. 14.

theſe

thoſe, whoſe confidence is placed in titles and pedigrees, will then appear in it's proper light, when the ſuppoſed carpenter's ſon ſhall be ſeen on his throne of glory, and the fiſherman ſeated at his right hand. DISC. IX.

The account of John being called, by our bleſſed Lord, from his employment of fiſhing, to that of preaching the Goſpel, is thus given us, Matt. iv. 21. "And Jeſus going on "from thence," that is, from the place where he had juſt before called Peter and Andrew, "ſaw other two brethren, James the ſon of "Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ſhip "with Zebedee their father, mending their "nets; and he called them. And they im-"mediately left the ſhip, and their father, and "followed him." Their minds had been prepared for the advent of the Meſſiah by the ſermons of the Baptiſt, who indeed had pointed him out to Andrew, and another diſciple, not improbably John himſelf, for the Lamb of God. Upon his appearance and call, therefore, they readily received and obeyed him, laying the foundation of the Chriſtian build-

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ing in the renunciation of the world. And here it always muſt be laid by every one who is deſirous of being "the diſciple whom Jeſus "loveth." All are not called to forſake their occupations and to commence preachers, as the Apoſtles were, Chriſt having appointed in his church a regular way of entering into the miniſtry; and at this door, when duly prepared for it by a ſuitable education, all are now to enter, who find themſelves inclined and diſpoſed by the good Spirit of God to undertake that bleſſed work. But every one is called to be ready, in heart and mind, to quit all that comes in competition with duty, and to follow the Saviour in the path of holy living. It is neceſſary for us all to leave thoſe companies, and engagements, and ways of living which enſnare our ſouls, and entangle our affections in the toils of ſin. And when duty to God requires it, we muſt forſake our friends and relations, rather than reject the ſalvation of Chriſt. Whoever is in error, or in ſin, will, by the good providence of God, be often called to come out of it in the courſe of his life. He ſhall, perhaps, hear a ſer-

a ſermon, that ſhews him to himſelf, and awakens him; or ſome kind and charitable friend ſhall admoniſh him; or the holy ſpirit ſhall cauſe his own conſcience to be his reprover. Then, O ſinner, it is, that Jeſus calleth *thee*. Obey him inſtantly; leave all that, whatever it be, whereby thou offendeſt, though near and dear to thee; join thyſelf to him, as thy maſter, and director, in all things; and thou, as well as St. John, ſhalt be beloved of him. DISC. IX.

When our Lord gave his Apoſtles their commiſſion to preach the Goſpel, he ſurnamed our Evangeliſt and his Brother James, *Boanerges*, that is, in our language, *Sons of thunder*. Thereby he intimated the powerful effects of their preaching that word, which is frequently compared to thunder; being, like that, the voice of God ſpeaking from heaven, mighty in it's operation. If the one ſhake the earth, throw down lofty trees and towers, and, by the lightning which accompanieth it, diſſolve the hardeſt ſubſtances, the other ſhaketh the empire of ſin, caſteth down every thing which

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exalteth itſelf againſt heaven, blaſting and conſuming the corruption of the heart. Such are the effects of the word when preached with power: and happy are they who experience them, in reading and hearing the Goſpels, and more eſpecially that of St. John, who, on the wings of contemplation and faith, ſoaring aloft, like his own eagle, bears the thunder of the word, and cauſes it's glorious voice to be heard under the whole heaven.

In the courſe of the evangelical hiſtory, we find St. John, in conjunction with St. Peter and St. James, admitted to the knowlege and view of ſome more private miracles and tranſactions, when the other Apoſtles had not that honour. Theſe were the three who attended their Maſter, when he raiſed the daughter of Jarius from the dead. "He ſuffered no man to go in, ſave Peter, and James, and John." And this is, in ſome ſenſe, the happy lot of every diſciple whom Jeſus loveth. For although he no more "know Chriſt after the fleſh," or ſee him working his miracles in perſon, as St. John did, yet, by faith, the wonders of divine love and

and mercy are manifeſt unto him; and he beholds accompliſhed in himſelf and others that great work, which the miracles of Chriſt were deſigned to repreſent, the work of converſion and ſalvation. This work Jeſus only can effect, and none but his beloved diſciples know and underſtand it. This ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he ſheweth to them the glory of his power in raiſing a ſoul from ſin to righteouſneſs, no leſs than he ſhewed it to the Apoſtles in raiſing the maid from death to life.

The ſame three diſciples accompanied their Lord, excluſive of all the reſt, at the two moſt remarkable ſcenes of his exaltation and humiliation; that is to ſay, when he was transfigured upon mount Tabor, and when he was in an agony, in the garden of Gethſemane. With regard to the former we read, that "he "took Peter, and James, and John, up into "a high mountain, apart, and was transfigured "before them." There they beheld his mortal body ſuddenly clothed upon with light, as with a garment; they beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten; they ſaw the Sun of

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Righteouſneſs ſhining in his ſtrength; they ſaw Moſes and Elias glorified with him, as the Law and the Prophets always appear, when ſeen in company with Jeſus; and they heard the voice from heaven declaring him to be the beloved of the Father. Again, at his paſſion, "he "taketh with him Peter, and the two ſons of "Zebedee, James and John, and began to "be ſore amazed, and very heavy." Then they beheld him encompaſſed with the infirmities of a man, and beſet by the powers of darkneſs; they beheld him humbled under the load of our ſins; they ſaw the Sun overcaſt with a cloud; and heard the ſame divine perſon praying in a bitter agony, as one ſmitten of God in his anger, and afflicted unto death. And happy is every diſciple, whom Jeſus ſo loveth, as to admit him, by faith, to behold and dwell upon the contemplation of his bleſſed Maſter, in theſe, his two ſtates of exaltation and humiliation; the glory of his divine, and the ſufferings of his human nature. Theſe are ſubjects, on which a man can never meditate, but with infinite profit and advantage. By aſcending the holy mount, and there viewing

viewing, in the transfiguration of Jesus, the glory of his person, and an ensample of that glory which he shall bestow on his saints, at the resurrection, he is armed against the pain and shame of the cross, and strengthened to undergo his portion of sufferings in the world. By attending his Redeemer in the garden, during his agony, he learns the intolerable punishments due to sin, and the amazing love of him who would descend from Tabor to Gethsemane, to bear them for sinners; he is prepared to take up his cross, and to be conformed to Christ in sufferings, from thence looking back to the glory which the Son of God left for a time, that he might bestow it on his beloved disciples for ever. Whosoever hath so digested in his heart these two subjects, as to be able to reduce the considerations on them to practice, hath attended his Master, with St. John, on the mount, and in the garden. DISC. IX.

Three times we hear in the Gospels the beloved disciple reproved by his Master, to shew us that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth

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and purgeth, till, like the branch of a well-dreſſed vine, he bring forth more and better fruit. Once, a ſpark of ambition, lighting upon the ſpirits of the two brothers, James and John, had ſuddenly inflamed them with a vehement deſire of pre-eminence above their colleagues in the miniſtry: they wanted to "ſit, one on his right hand, and the other "on his left, in his kingdom." Our Lord gave them to underſtand, that they, who were called to be his diſciples and apoſtles, were called to do his work, to labour and to ſuffer for the ſervice of the church, and the ſalvation of ſouls, and ſhould eſteem it ſufficient to be exalted, like their bleſſed Maſter, in heaven, after the work was done. Thus the two young candidates for promotion, ſtood reproved. Made wiſer by the inſtructions of their Lord, and the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them at the day of Pentecoſt, they thought no more of preceding their brethren, except in diligence and patience: they renounced ſelf, preached the Goſpel, ſuffered perſecution, were crowned, indeed, but it was with thorns; and thus, at length, in a far better

better ſenſe, they obtained their wiſh, of ſitting upon thrones with Chriſt, in his kingdom. DISC. IX.

At another time the two diſciples James and John, not bearing to ſee their Lord rejected by the ſchiſmatical Samaritans, were for calling fire from heaven to conſume them, after the example of the prophet Elijah. But Chriſt rebuked them, telling them, "they knew "not what manner of ſpirit they were of; for "the ſon of man was come to ſave the lives of "men, not to deſtroy them." The preſent is the day of grace and mercy, long ſuffering and forbearance, with Chriſt, and it ought to be ſo with his diſciples. The hour is coming, when, like Elijah, who repreſented him in his judicial capacity, he ſhall execute the vengeance written, and burn up his enemies on every ſide. But the time is not yet.

The third reproof St. John met with from his Maſter was likewiſe for an inſtance of indiſcreet zeal, in forbidding a perſon to caſt out devils in Chriſt's name, becauſe he followed not them.

DISC. IX. them, "Forbid him not (ſays Chriſt); for there "is no man which ſhall do a miracle in my "name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me. "For he that is not againſt us, is on our part. "For whoever ſhall give you a cup of water "to drink in my name, becauſe ye belong to "Chriſt, he ſhall not loſe his reward [b]." No emulation or jealouſy ſhould prevent our encouraging every man to do good, though not in all points as we are, or could wiſh him to be. Whatever real good he does, it is God who does it in him, and in time that God may reveal all other things to him; towards which, we ourſelves, by treating him with tenderneſs and kindneſs, may be made inſtrumental.

But theſe offences, upon Chriſt's admonitions, having been repented of and forſaken, they deprive not our Apoſtle of the place he had obtained in his Lord's favour. For at the laſt ſupper we find him ſitting next to Jeſus, and, as the manner then was, reclining on his breaſt: as it is the privilege of the beloved

[b] Mark ix. 38.

diſciple,

diſciple, when admitted to the ſupper of the Lamb, to pour out all his prayers and his complaints into the boſom of his Redeemer, who is always ready to hear, always mighty to ſave.

At the apprehenſion of Jeſus, John fled with the reſt, but, quickly returning again, entered into the High Prieſt's palace, and attended his bleſſed Maſter through every ſtage of his paſſion, till we behold him taking his ſtation at the foot of the croſs, where he is uſually drawn in pictures of the crucifixion, with a countenance full of grief and love unutterable. From the croſs Jeſus commended his holy mother to the care of St. John, who from thenceforth, happy in an opportunity of ſhewing his love to his Lord, as well as of entertaining ſuch a gueſt, "took her to his own "home," where ſhe continued till her death, treated by him with the duty and affection of a ſon. Let the diſciple, then, who would ſhew himſelf worthy the love of Chriſt, often contemplate and ſympathize with his ſuffering Lord, placing himſelf, in imagination, at the

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the foot of the croſs, and looking with the eye of faith, on him who was crucified thereon: let him abide by the perſecuted truth and the afflicted ſervants of Jeſus, in the hour of darkneſs and ſorrow; and let him, for Chriſt's ſake, and in obedience to his repeated injunctions, honour and ſhew kindneſs to the church, ſo long as he lives, and be a dutiful ſon to her.

Upon the firſt tidings of the reſurrection, St. John, running with St. Peter, outran him, and came firſt to the ſepulchre, as the ſoul, that has the love of Chriſt abiding in her, will always be foremoſt in queſt of him.—It was St. John who diſcovered Jeſus to St. Peter, when he appeared in the habit of a ſtranger, at the ſea of Tiberias. "That diſciple whom Jeſus "loved, ſaith to Peter, It is the Lord." He who loves Chriſt, will always know him when he comes in the diſguiſe of a *ſtranger*, or a *poor man:* he will know, that *it is the Lord* who aſks relief of him in their perſons; and he will inform others of the ſame great truth.—It was concerning St. John that a report went among

among the diſciples as if he was never to die, grounded by miſtake on our Lord's anſwer to St. Peter's queſtion—"Lord, what ſhall this "man do? If I will that he tarry till I come, "what is that to thee?" But, alas, St. John loved Chriſt too well, to think an exemption from death, for the ſake of living in ſuch a world as this, a thing to be deſired. And whoever loves his Maſter as he did, will be of the ſame opinion. DISC. IX.

After the effuſion of the Spirit at the day of Pentecoſt, we read of St. John, in the character of an Apoſtle, uſing his gifts for the good of mankind, healing the ſick, preaching the Goſpel, thrown into priſon, and brought forth before the Jewiſh council, but ſtill undaunted in bearing his teſtimony; herein leaving an example to his ſucceſſors, the miniſters of Chriſt, through all generations.

From the eccleſiaſtical hiſtories we learn, that, after preaching the Goſpel, and founding many churches in Aſia, he was ſent bound from thence to Rome, at the command of the tyrant

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tyrant Domitian, who had him caſt into a caldron of boiling oil. But the God, who preſerved the three children in the midſt of the fiery furnace, brought the apoſtle out of the caldron unhurt, to convince us, that nothing can harm "the diſciple whom Jeſus loveth." The emperor, however, not at all moved by this miraculous deliverance, baniſhed the holy man to a wretched and comfortleſs iſland, called Patmos, where he ſaw heaven opened, and beheld thoſe glorious viſions recorded in the book of Revelation: as God often vouchſafes a larger portion of ſpiritual joys and comforts of his ſervants, when they are ſecluded from thoſe of the world.

Upon the death of the emperor Domitian, many of his cruel edicts were revoked by his ſucceſſor; when St. John, taking advantage of the indulgence, returned to Epheſus: and finding Timothy the biſhop of that church martyred, he took upon himſelf the government of it, till, in a good old age of about an hundred years, he moſt willingly reſigned his meek and gentle ſpirit into the hands of his Lord and Saviour, to experience the fulneſs of

his

his love, and poſſeſs the glories he had ſo often contemplated. DISC. IX.

Theſe are the great outlines of St. John's life and character. But, after all, whoever would be thoroughly acquainted with him, in order to become like him, muſt ſurvey and copy that fair picture which he hath drawn of himſelf in his divine writings, where we ſometimes behold the lofty flights of the eagle, and at others hear the plaintive voice of the turtle; we behold him viewing and deſcribing the glories of Chriſt in his Godhead and kingdom; we hear him relating the ſweetly ſorrowful and loving diſcourſes of his dear Maſter, in his ſtate of humiliation. Let theſe holy books, therefore, be in our hands, until they ſhall have wrought their proper work in our hearts; that is to ſay, until, by believing the doctrines and practiſing the duties taught therein, we ſhall have learned to live the life of faith and charity. So ſhall we be CHRISTIANS, in word, and in deed; ſo ſhall we be true followers of the ſaint of this day; ſo ſhall we be "the DISCIPLES whom Jeſus will LOVE."

DIS-

DISCOURSE X.

RACHEL COMFORTED.

JER. XXXI. 15, 16, 17.

Thus ſaith the LORD, *a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping: Rachel, weeping for her children, refuſed to be comforted for her children, becauſe they were not. Thus ſaith the* LORD, *Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work ſhall be rewarded, ſaith the* LORD, *and they ſhall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, ſaith the* LORD, *that thy children ſhall come again to their own border.*

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OF the events which befel the church of Iſrael in old time, many were by Providence ordained and diſpoſed to be figurative of other events, in the latter days, relative to the church Chriſtian, or Univerſal. Let it be ſuppoſed for example, in the preſent inſtance, that the Babyloniſh captivity, and ſubſequent

DISC. X. reſtoration, to which theſe words of Jeremiah relate, did, like the Egyptian bondage, and the redemption therefrom, repreſent that more wretched, durable, and general captivity, in which mankind were detained by their grand enemy, with the reſtoration from it, which the Son of God, as at this ſeaſon, was born to effect. And let us try, upon this plan, to ſhew the beauty and propriety of the application which St. Matthew has made of the paſſage to the ſlaughter of the Bethlehemitiſh infants, and the lamentations of thoſe who were thus bereaved of their children, by the ſword of Herod.

It is not eaſy, perhaps, to find a more judicious illuſtration of the caſe in hand, than the following one, given by the excellently learned Dr. JACKSON, to whoſe moſt uſeful labours, on a curious and difficult ſubject, I muſt here, once for all, acknowledge myſelf indebted for the ſubſtance of what I am now about to lay before you.

"We know," ſays this able Divine, "that a "map, though in itſelf a thouſand times leſs

"than

" than the leaſt parcel of incloſed ground, may DISC. X.
" repreſent the exact form or proportion of
" the country whoſe name it bears, though
" that be ten thouſand times bigger than the
" largeſt field that our eyes can look upon.
" And thus hath the wiſdom of God, under
" the ſame words and phraſes, included two
" deliverances, of which the one is a map
" to the other. He therefore who ſhall
" deny paſſages to be literally meant of the
" deliverance of Judah and Benjamin from
" Babylon, becauſe they are only fulfilled in
" our deliverance by Chriſt, will give the Jew
" no ſmall advantage; he will commit as
great an overſight, as if an heir, poſſeſſed of
" a goodly eſtate, ſhould burn the map, or
" terrar of it, which his anceſtors had truly
" taken for the benefit of their ſucceſſors, if
" they ſhould know how to uſe it, when any
" controverſy ſhould ariſe concerning the
" bounds or extent of their inheritance. The
" Jew, on the contrary, in denying theſe
" places to be meant of Chriſt and us, be-
" cauſe they have been literally verified of the
" deliverance of his fathers by Zorobabel and

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"Joſhua the prieſt, is like a man diſtracted, "who boaſts he hath a goodly heritage, be- "cauſe he can ſhew the map or engroſſed "terrar of thoſe lands, of which the law has "deprived him, ſince he knew not how to "uſe them aright."

In the proſecution of this deſign, permit me, in the

First place, To collect and preſent to you the hiſtorical circumſtances concerning the perſon introduced by Jeremiah, as making lamentation over her children, and the occaſion of her ſo doing, with the prophet's conſolitary addreſs to her, upon that occaſion: after which we ſhall be prepared, in the

Second place, To take a view of thoſe parallel circumſtances, which offer themſelves in the lamentation made by the Bethlehemitiſh mothers, and the cauſe thereof, with the conſideration which was to adminiſter comfort to *them*,

them, in the day of their great and bitter affliction. DISC. X.

The mournful ſcene is laid by Jeremiah in Ramah, a city belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe, it may be obſerved, the prophet himſelf was a member, as we learn from the firſt verſe in his book; "The "words of Jeremiah the ſon of Hilkiah, of "the prieſts that were in Anathoth, in the "land of Benjamin." The perſon introduced by him, as making lamentations, is Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, and the mother of that tribe. She had before borne Joſeph, at which time, by divine inſtinct, with alluſion to the name juſt impoſed, ſhe ſaid—"The "LORD ſhall *add* to me another ſon." In childbirth, however, through the prevalence of her pains, ſhe was induced to give up her former hopes of a ſecond ſon, for loſt. Her attendant endeavoured to comfort her with her own prediction; "Fear not, for thou "ſhalt have this ſon alſo." Yet "when her "ſoul was in departing (for ſhe died!)"—never ſurely was there a more affecting parentheſis—

DISC. X. "when her ſoul was in departing, (for ſhe "died!) ſhe called his name *Benoni*," that is, *the ſon of my ſorrow.* "His father," ſeeking to avert the omen with ſpeed, "called him "Benjamin," or, *the ſon of the right hand*, that is, of power and glory.

Heu nunquam vana parentum auguria— the obſervation of an heathen poet, is found more particularly verified in the hiſtory of the patriarchs, becauſe among them there was often a foreſight more than human, and the proſpect into futurity was opened to them by a light from above. The different fates of the tribe of Benjamin ſeem to have anſwered the different names impoſed at the birth of it's founder, by father and mother. No tribe more various than that; none more afflicted with diſaſters and calamities. At one time ſlaughtered by it's fellow tribes, almoſt to exciſion, a true *Benoni* to Rachel, who, had ſhe been alive, muſt have "wept for her children, "with an exceeding bitter weeping;" at another, reſtored to populouſneſs and proſperity, placed, as it were, at the head of the reſt, furniſhing the firſt king, who ruled God's people

ple Iſrael, and realizing the name and character of *Benjamin*, the *ſon of the right hand.* DISC. X.

Upon the revolt of the ten tribes, Benjamin adhered to Judah, then the royal tribe, the tribe that gave birth to David, the tribe from which, in the fulneſs of time, a greater than David was to deſcend. When Jeremiah uttered the words now under our conſideration, Judah was cloſely beſieged in Jeruſalem by the Chaldean army, in whoſe way thither the land of Benjamin lay. It experienced, therefore, of courſe, all the horrors of invaſion. It was miſerably waſted, and it's inhabitants were carried away into captivity. This is the reaſon why old Rachel ſtill renews her former complaint, and will not be perſuaded, but that Benjamin muſt ſtill be *Benoni.* She and her daughters (for under the name of Rachel we muſt comprehend all the woeful mothers of that tribe) fill the heavens with their outcries, whilſt their children are forced from their embraces into miſerable bondage in Babylon. And though mention be only made of Ramah, a city of Benjamin,

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yet muſt we imagine the wailings to have been as loud and bitter about Bethlehem, which, though in the tribe of Judah, was upon the borders of Benjamin, and near unto the place where Rachel died; as we read in Geneſis; "Rachel died, and was buried in "the way to Ephrath, which is *Bethlehem*, "and Jacob ſet a pillar upon her grave; that is "the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day[a]." Such was "the voice heard" in the days of Jeremiah, the "lamentation, and the bitter "weeping;" when "Rachel," as the general mother, and repreſentative of all the mothers in the tribe, "weeping for her children, refuſed "to be comforted, becauſe they were not." As a people, they had no civil exiſtence. They were in that ſenſe, loſt; they were dead; they were gone into captivity.

It was under theſe circumſtances, that the prophet addreſſed the diſconſolate mother —conſidering him as a *Benjamite*, we may ſay, *his* diſconſolate mother—"Thus ſaith "the LORD, Refrain thy voice from weeping,

[a] Gen. xxxv. 20.

"and

" and thine eyes from tears; for thy work ſhall DISC.
" be rewarded, ſaith the LORD, and they ſhall X.
" come again from the land of the enemy;
" and there is hope in thine end, ſaith the
" LORD, that thy children ſhall come again
" to their own border." As if he had ſaid in
" other words—

—Remember, O Rachel, my mother, the days that are paſt, and call to mind God's wonders of old time. Remember how thou ſorrowedſt, when thou broughteſt forth my father Benjamin, as fearing leſt he ſhould have died with thee, or before thee. Yet after thy pains hadſt thou this joy, that a man was born into the world. And though thou didſt impoſe upon him a name betokening ſorrow, yet his father wiſely changed it into one predictive of better things. Remember, when Benjamin, for the good of his brethren, was called to go down into Egypt, how Jacob ſuppoſed him loſt, and complained that he was bereaved of his children. But, notwithſtanding theſe ill bodings, Benjamin, at length, returned in ſafety, with his brother Judah; the

father

DISC. X. father was again bleſſed with the ſight of his youngeſt and beſt beloved ſon, the light of his eyes, and the ſtaff of his old age. Such, at this time, my mother, is thy fear and ſorrow; but greater, hereafter, ſhall be thy comfort, and thy joy. Benjamin is indeed led captive into Babylon; but *Judah* is once more gone with him, as his pledge; and if he bring him not back again, let the blame be his, yea mine, yea God's for ever. "For thus ſaith the "LORD, if my covenant be not with day and "night, and if I have not appointed the ordi- "nances of heaven and earth, then will I caſt "away the ſeed of Jacob and David my ſer- "vant, ſo that I will not take any of his ſeed "to be rulers over the ſeed of Abraham, Iſaac, "and Jacob—for I will cauſe their captivity "to return, and have mercy on them—yea "I have ſworn by my holineſs that I will not "fail David." Now, my mother, while this promiſe laſts, in general, to Iſrael, as Abraham's ſeed, Benjamin muſt have his portion in the bleſſing. And while it remains good in particular to the ſeed of David, Benjamin, for his faithful adherence to Judah, in proſpe-

rity

rity and adverſity, muſt participate with him in the prerogative. And when the kingdom ſhall be reſtored, as reſtored it will be, whoever ſhall ſit on the left hand, faithful Benjamin muſt ſit on the right hand of the throne of David—— DISC. X.

This, taking all circumſtances into the account, ſeems to have been the import of Jeremiah's conſolatory addreſs to Rachel, in the day of her calamity. And his words, or rather thoſe of the Almighty, were, in their fulleſt import, made good to her. Within ſeventy years, it came to paſs, that the poſterity of Benjamin returned, with Judah, into the land of Promiſe, and inhabited Jeruſalem, Bethlehem, and other bordering cities, promiſcuouſly with the royal tribe. "Her work was "rewarded;" her patient expectation, in faith and hope of the promiſes made her, failed not of it's fruit, in the appointed ſeaſon: her "children came again from the land of the "enemy to their own border," as the LORD had foretold by his prophet; they "returned, "and came to Sion with ſongs; joy was "upon

DISC. X. "upon their heads," and in their hearts; "and "ſorrow and ſighing flew away!"

We are now prepared to take a view, as was propoſed in the

Second place, of thoſe parallel circumſtances which offer themſelves, in the lamentation of the Bethlehemitiſh mothers, and the cauſe thereof, with the conſideration which was to adminiſter comfort to *them* in the day of their great and moſt bitter affliction.

The death of the tribe of Benjamin, in conjunction with the tribe of Judah, in the time of Jeremiah was a civil death, a departure into captivity. Their reſtoration from it was, conſequently, a civil reſtoration, a reſtoration to their ancient city and polity in their own land. The death of the Bethlehemitiſh infants was a bodily death, by the ſword of Herod; their reſtoration muſt therefore be a reſtoration to the bodily life, thus violently taken from them, that is, it muſt be a reſurrection. Rachel's preſent lamentation for the bodily death

death of her children muſt have a comfort anſwerable to it, as her former lamentation for their civil death had a comfort anſwerable to *that*. Let us ſee what analogy and proportion the ſorrow and joy in one caſe bear to the ſorrow and joy in the other. DISC. X.

There is no need to ſhock your feelings, by endeavouring to draw a picture at large of this day's moſt abominable maſſacre. Suffice it to ſay, that the bloody murder of children in their tendereſt and moſt helpleſs eſtate, torn from the arms, and butchered in ſuch multitudes, before the eyes of their mothers, muſt again cauſe "a voice to be heard, lamentation, "and weeping, and great mourning;" great, beyond the conception of any, but thoſe who then expreſſed, or were witneſſes to it. We cannot read the words which deſcribe it, without imagining that we hear Rachel, called from her tomb near Bethlehem, "weeping "for her children," that we ſee her turning away, and "refuſing to be comforted for her "children, becauſe they were not;" becauſe they were departed hence, and were no more

to

DISC. X.

to be found in the land of the living: they were led away into that other captivity, more wretched and durable than the captivity of Benjamin, with Judah, in Babylon; they were deprived of light and life; they were hurried from the warm and cheerful precincts of day, to be impriſoned in the cold and dark dominions of the king of terrors. And who can bring them from thence? Not the High Prieſt Joſhua, the ſon of Joſedek; not Zorobable, who conducted their fathers from captivity; not Samſon, though, in the prime of his ſtrength, he carried away the gates of Gaza; not David, nor their father Benjamin, though both had been alive to command, or lead the whole poſterity of Iſrael. All theſe might have ſaid of the ſons of Rachel this day commemorated by us, as David did of his child —"We ſhall go to them, but they ſhall not "return to us.— But the holieſt of the ancient prieſts and prophets, the mightieſt among the ancient kings and rulers, were ſtill ſubject to death, and had taken their laſt repoſe with the beggar in the duſt. Where then

is

is the wonted promiſe of Rachel's reward? Who ſhall comfort her in this calamity? DISC. X.

Nothing, certainly, can wear a more gloomy and comfortleſs aſpect, than things here ſeem to do. Yet in this as in the former inſtance, "Thus ſaith the LORD" to the mourner—and who elſe can ſay it?—"Refrain thy voice "from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: "for thy work ſhall be rewarded, ſaith the "LORD, and they ſhall come again from the "land of the enemy; and there is hope in "thine end, ſaith the LORD, that thy child-"ren ſhall come again to their own border."

Recollecting what hath been ſaid above, and bearing in mind the circumſtances of time and place, pointed out in the application made of the former part of the paſſage by St. Matthew, we may ſuppoſe this latter part to ſpeak to the Bethlehemitiſh mothers, in ſome ſuch manner as the following——

At Bethlehem, the birth-place of Benjamin, where the pillar was erected over Rachel's grave,

DISC. X. grave, a child is born, who has cauſed the children of Benjamin and Judah once more to become *Benoni's*, true *ſons of ſorrow* to their mother's; a character he himſelf is to ſuſtain on earth, inſomuch, that "a ſword ſhall pierce "through the ſoul" of her that bare him. As the ſeed of the woman, and with regard to the nature derived from her, he is to be "a "man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief." But, like *Benjamin*, from his Father he ſhall receive a name expreſſive of far different things; "a name above every name;" he ſhall be exalted from miſery and mortality to "the *right* "*hand* of the majeſty in the heavens;" there to take poſſeſſion of an inheritance in the true land of Promiſe. Of this his inheritance in a ſtate of power and glory, he will not fail to make thoſe partakers, whoſe blood has been ſhed by the executioners of Herod, on his account. Look upon this their final deliverance and reſtoration, as it is delineated in that map, or chart of it, the deliverance of your anceſtors from the Babyloniſh captivity, and the reſtoration to their own land. Call to mind what was ſaid by them, at that time, on the ground

ground of their own happy experience— "They that ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy; he "that goeth forth and weepeth," as if, ignorant of the art of huſbandry, he feared the corn he was ſowing would periſh in the earth, "ſhall doubtleſs come again with joy, bringing his ſheaves with him." The heavens, echoing with your cries, and the earth moiſtened with your tears, are witneſſes to men and angels, that you have more plentifully ſowed in grief, than your anceſtors. As the ſorrows of your ſeed-time have abounded, ſo the joys of your harveſt ſhall ſuper-abound. The LORD's promiſe of old is not yet expired, but extends, in full force, to you and yours. With what more precious ſeed could the land of Judah and Benjamin be ſown, than the blood of tender infants, harmleſs and undefiled even in thought? Scattered upon the ground by cruel hands, it ſhall be gathered by the power of him, who diſpenſeth the breath of life to all things living. None of this ſeed ſhall be loſt, or prove unfruitful. Every grain ſhall produce it's ear, and every ear it's proportion of incorruptible and pleaſant fruit. Great, therefore, DISC. X.

DISC. X. as your affliction is allowed to be, yet mourn not as they that have no hope, but, even in the midſt of your bitter complaints, ſtill remember, that Rachel's pains muſt have a joyful recompence, and her exceeding ſorrows portend extraordinary comforts in the iſſue. Only let patience have it's perfect work through faith, and that "work ſhall be rewarded" with the poſſeſſion of the promiſes. For, through the Saviour who is born, "there is hope in the "end," that, like as your fathers, in God's good time, "came again from the land of the enemy "to their own border," ſo your children, whoſe untimely exciſion you lament, ſhall come again from the ſtrong holds of the grave, whither they had been led away captive, to the lot of their inheritance in the heavenly Canaan, and the new Jeruſalem, there to live and reign with him, for whom they have now ſuffered and died. *Theſe* children of Judah and Benjamin, like their progenitors, "ſhall return, "and come to Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy ſhall be upon their heads; they, and "you with them, ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, "and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall again flee away."

The

The words, thus explained, will ſuggeſt to us ſome uſeful reflections, ſuitable to the feſtival, on the caſe of the ſlaughtered *infants*, and that of the lamenting *mothers*. DISC. X.

With regard to the *infants*, we may obſerve the choice, made by the church, of proper perſons to attend the bleſſed Jeſus, upon the commemoration of his birth. Theſe are St. Stephen, St. John, and the Innocents. He was born to ſuffer; and, therefore, the feſtival of his nativity is immediately followed by the feſtivals of thoſe who ſuffered for him. St. Stephen was a martyr, and the firſt martyr, both in will and in deed: St. John, the beloved diſciple, was ſuch in will, but not in deed, being miraculouſly preſerved from the death intended for him by Domitian. The Innocents were martyrs in deed, but not in will, by reaſon of their tender age.

Of theſe laſt, however, it pleaſed the prince of martyrs to have his train compoſed, when he made his entry into the world, as at this ſeaſon; a train of infants, ſuited to an infant Saviour; a train of Innocents, meet to follow the ſpotleſs

DISC. X. Lamb, who came to convince the world of ſin, and to redeem it in righteouſneſs. They were the firſt-fruits offered to the Son of God, after his incarnation, and their blood the firſt that flowed on his account. They appeared as ſo many champions in the field, clad in the King's coat of armour, to intercept the blows directed againſt him.

The Chriſtian poet, PRUDENTIUS, in one of his hymns, has an elegant and beautiful addreſs to theſe young ſufferers for their Redeemer—

Salvate, flores Martyrum,
Quos, lucis ipſo in limine,
Chriſti inſecutor ſuſtulit,
Ceu, turbo naſcentes roſas,
Vos, prima Chriſti victima,
Grex immolatorum tener,
Aram ante ipſam, ſimplices,
Palmâ et coronis luditis.

"Hail ye firſt flowers of the evangelical ſpring, "cut off by the ſword of perſecution, ere yet "you had unfolded your leaves to the morn- "ing, as the early roſe droops before the "withering

" withering blaſt. Driven, like a flock of Disc.
" lambs, to the ſlaughter, you have the honour X.
" to compoſe the firſt ſacrifice offered at the
" altar of Chriſt; before which, methinks I
" ſee your innocent ſimplicity ſporting with
" the palms and the crowns held out to you
" from above."

So remarkable an event neceſſarily attracts our attention to that age, which is propoſed by our Lord, as, in many reſpects, a model for us all to copy, in forming our tempers and diſpoſitions. " They brought young children " to Chriſt, that he ſhould touch them, and his " diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought them. " But Jeſus was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid, " Suffer little children to come to me, and for- " bid them not, for of ſuch is the kingdom of " God." And again, when the diſciples " aſked " him, who ſhould be the greateſt in the king- " dom of heaven, he took a little child, and ſet " him in the midſt, and ſaid, Except ye be con- " verted and become as little children, ye ſhall " not enter into the kingdom of God." To be fit for the inheritance of the ſaints in light, we

DISC. X. must put off the paſſions which are too apt to infeſt us as *men*, ambition, pride, craft, envy, hatred, malice, anger, revenge, covetouſneſs, and concupiſcence of every ſort, and put on their oppoſites, humility, meekneſs, modeſty, charity, purity, ſimplicity; we muſt become ſuch in heart and mind, by the diſcipline of religion, as little children are by their age; poſſeſſed of the ſame unlimited confidence in the care of a Father, who, as we are aſſured, careth for us; looking up to him for all we want, and flying to him for protection from all we fear; never entertaining a ſuſpicion of our being forſaken, or neglected by him, nor the leaſt inclination to reſiſt his will; equally inſenſible to the promiſes and threatenings of the world; reſigned to ſuffer, and not afraid to die, when we are called ſo to do; able to ſmile at the drawn dagger, and ready to embrace the arm that aims it at our heart.

This idea of a child of God was daily realized, to the admiration of the whole pagan world, in the firſt ages of the church. The ſame inexhauſtible and all powerful grace will realize it

it in theſe latter days, when religion ſhall be conſidered by us as an art, rather than a ſcience; when *non magna loquimur, ſed vivimus*, ſhall be the device adopted by the Chriſtian philoſopher; and the precepts of the Goſpel ſhall be practiſed with as much diligence as that with which it's evidences are ſtudied. DISC. X.

And lo, for our encouragement, in the portion of Scripture this day appointed for the Epiſtle, the veil is rent which ſeparates the two worlds; the proſpect is opened into another ſyſtem; the "holieſt of all" is diſcloſed the celeſtial mount is diſcovered; and on it's ſummit "we ſee a Lamb ſtand, with an hundred and "forty-four thouſand," of the like ſweet and "innocent diſpoſition, "having his Father's "name written on their foreheads. Theſe are "they which follow the Lamb, whitherſoever "he goeth. Theſe were redeemed from among "men, being the firſt-fruits unto God and the "Lamb. And in their mouth was found no "guile, for they were without fault before the "throne of God." From their ſtation they beckon us after them, ſhewing us, for our in-

DISC. X. ſtruction and direction in the way, that "of ſuch "is the kingdom of heaven."

And now we are ready, perhaps, to ſay with St. Peter, on an occaſion ſomewhat ſimilar, It is good for us to be here! Let us make our abode on the mount! But the time is not yet. We muſt return, and conclude, as we began, with the lamenting *mothers*, whom we left behind us, in the valley of tears.

Their cries, like thoſe of Rachel, portending the birth of a *Benoni*, a *ſon of ſorrow*, teach us, his diſciples, to expect ſorrow for our portion in this life, and to look forward to another, for comfort and joy.

In the world, as in Rama, "a voice is heard, "lamentation and weeping, and great mourn-"ing." Earthly poſſeſſions and ſatisfactions of every ſort are, by their nature, tranſient. They *may* leave us; we *muſt* leave them. To him who views them, in their moſt ſettled ſtate, with the eye of wiſdom, they appear, as the air in the calmeſt day does to the philoſopher through

through his teleſcope, ever undulating and fluctuating. If we place our happineſs in them, we build upon the wave. It rolls from under us, and we ſink into the depths of grief and deſpondency. DISC. X.

Children, relations, friends, honours, houſes, lands, revenues, and endowments, the goods of nature and of fortune, nay even of grace itſelf, are only *lent*. It is our misfortune to fancy they are *given*. We ſtart, therefore, and are angry, when the loan is called in. We think ourſelves *maſters*, when we are but *ſtewards*; and forget, that to each of us will it one day be ſaid, "Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip, "for thou muſt be no longer ſteward."

Youth dreams of joys unremitted, and pleaſures uninterrupted; and ſees not in the charming perſpective the croſs accidents that lie in wait, to prevent their being ſo. But ſhould no ſuch accidents for a while intervene, to diſturb the pleaſing viſion, age will certainly awake, and find it an end. The ſcythe of time will be as effectual, though not ſo expeditious, as the

ſword

DISC. X. sword of the perſecutor; and without a Herod, Rachel, if ſhe live long, will be heard lamenting; ſhe will experience ſorrows, in which the world can adminiſter no adequate comfort. She muſt therefore look beyond it.

The patriarchs and people of God, in old time, were often delivered from adverſity. They often enjoyed proſperity. But after all the wonders wrought for them, and all the bleſſings conferred upon them, the iſſue of things was ſtill the ſame. Theſe friends and favourites of Heaven ſtill ſaw their relations, frequently their children, falling around them, and at length dropped, themſelves, into the grave, to be mourned over by thoſe that ſurvived them. This was the caſe even in the land of Promiſe itſelf. Deplorable, indeed, therefore, and deſperate, like the worſt of the heathen, would have been their condition, had they not been taught, through temporal deliverances, and temporal proſperity, in a temporal land of Promiſe, to contemplate another deliverance from the power of the deſtroyer,

another

another prosperity that should have no end, in another land of Promise, which should never be taken from them, and from which they should never be taken; where they, their parents, and their children, should meet again, to part no more. What else is "the hope of "Israel," what else can it be, but a "resur- "rection from the dead [b]?" DISC. X.

Nothing can be plainer than the words of the Apostle on this subject. Having enumerated the ancient worthies, from Abel to David and the succeeding prophets, he thus concludes; "These all, having obtained a "good report through faith, received not "the promise [c]," THE promise, emphatically, the grand promise, in faith of which they died, and of which all other promises were only shadows, and known by them to be such; "God having" all along foreseen and "pro- "vided some better thing for us;" better than any of those figurative promises which they

[b] Acts xxiv. 15. xxvi. 6. xxvii. 20.

[c] Την επαγγελιαν.

did

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did receive; to wit, an eternal redemption, and an eternal inheritance; that, in such eternal redemption and inheritance, "they, without us, should not be made perfect[a]," as God intends that we, together with them, at the general resurrection, shall be made perfect in heaven.

If, then, the mothers in Judah and Benjamin had been properly instructed in the faith of the ancient church, when Jeremiah addressed to them the words we have been considering, though they must understand them immediately as a promise that their children should be delivered from Babylon, and brought back again to their own land; yet their thoughts would naturally be carried on, for further comfort, to that other deliverance and restoration from death, promised by all the holy prophets, since the world began; even as we may presume the thoughts of a Christian parent would now be, whose son was a slave in Barbary, should a prophet be sent to him with the following message from God; "Your

[a] Heb. xi. 40.

"son

" ſon is gone into captivity, but he ſhall cer- DISC. X.
" tainly be redeemed from it."

This, however, is indiſputable; that, in the application which St. Matthew has taught us to make of the paſſage, it can admit of no other conſtruction; becauſe there can be no deliverance from bodily death, but by a bodily reſurrection.

Learn we, therefore, and a more important and uſeful leſſon cannot be learned—whenever death deprives us of thoſe who are near and dear to us, to comfort ourſelves and one another with theſe words; and let each of us, as occaſion for conſolation ſhall offer itſelf, liſten to Jeremiah's prophecy, as if it were ſpoken to himſelf; " Thus ſaith the LORD; " Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine " eyes from tears; for thy work ſhall be re- " warded, ſaith the LORD, and they ſhall " come again from the land of the enemy. " And there is hope in thine end, ſaith the " LORD, that thy children," thy relations, or thy friends, " ſhall come again to their own " border;"

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"border;" that from the dark and desolate regions of the grave they shall come to the the light and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem; where, as holy John tells us, "there shall be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying*;" where Rachel shall finally cease her lamentations, lay aside her mourning veil, and wipe away all tears for ever from her eyes.

* Rev. xxi. 4.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XI.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

LUKE II. 21.

And when eight days were accompliſhed for the circumciſing of the child, his name was called JESUS, *which was ſo named of the angel, before he was conceived in the womb.*

THESE words conclude the Goſpel for the day, taken from a chapter which hath afforded ample matter of wonder and delight through the courſe of the preſent joyful ſeaſon, when the church, like the bleſſed virgin mother, is never ſeen, but with the holy child in her arms. By the portions already ſelected from it, we have been made to liſten to the ſermon preached by an angel upon the ſubject of the Nativity; and the ſweet notes of that anthem, ſung by the choir of heaven immediately

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diately after, are ſtill ſounding in our ears. With the happy and obedient ſhepherds we have been at Bethlehem, and there have ſeen "this great thing which is come to paſs, which "the Lord hath made known unto us;" and have found reaſon to return, like them, "glo-"rifying and praiſing God for all the things "that we have heard and ſeen, as it was told "unto us." Nor ſhall we ever forget, it is to be hoped (at leaſt, never, at this hallowed and gracious time), to imitate her example, who "kept all theſe ſaying, and pondered "them in her heart."

We are now conducted from the birth to the circumciſion of our Redeemer, an account of which immediately follows the hiſtory of the ſhepherds, in the words of the text. And very meet, and right, and our bounden duty it is, that we ſhould at this time, and in this place, employ our thoughts upon it; ſeeing it was the beginning of ſorrows to the Son of God, and the beginning of joy, becauſe the beginning of redemption, to the ſons of men, for whom the firſt blood of the all pro-

pitiating

pitiating victim was now ſhed. A ſtumbling block it may prove to the Jew, fooliſhneſs it may appear to the Greek, and to all thoſe, who, like the one, deſire a *ſign* of earthly ſplendor and magnificence, or, like the other, ſeek after the *wiſdom* of falſe philoſophy: but to the intelligent, and therefore humble believer, Chriſt, in this ſtate of weakneſs, pain, and ſorrow, is "the wiſdom of God" to contrive, "and the power of God" to effect the deliverance of his people. DISC. XI.

It is obſervable, that whenſoever, in the Scriptures, mention is made of any particular relative to the abaſement, the infirmity, and the ſhame ſubmitted to by Chriſt, it is preſently contraſted by ſomething concerning his exaltation, his power, and his glory; that ſo, the objection ariſing in the mind from a view of the former, may be obviated at once by the conſideration of the latter, and the Chriſtian may never loſe ſight of that capital article of his faith, the union of the two natures, divine and human, in the perſon of his Saviour. Thus we behold him in ſwaddling clothes;

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but inſtantly we hear the heavenly hoſt ſinging an Hallelujah to him. He lies in a manger; but the brighteſt ſtar in the firmament points the way to his abode. He expires upon the croſs; but all nature ſuffers with him, almoſt to a diſſolution. And thus, in the inſtance now before us, he is circumciſed indeed on earth, as the ſon of Abraham; but a name is given him from heaven, as the Son of God. For in theſe lowly and ignominious circumſtances, he receives the name enjoined before to be impoſed on him by the angel; a name above every name; a name which evil ſpirits fear, and good ones adore; a name, at which every knee ſhould rejoice to bow, and which every tongue ſhould exult to confeſs: ſince it is by this name that glory is given to God in the higheſt, peace reſtored to earth at war with it's Maker, and good-will ſtream forth to ſinful men.

In order to unfold the myſtery of the circumciſion of Chriſt, it will be neceſſary to enquire into the inſtitution of this rite, with the reaſon and end thereof, "Moſes (ſaith our

"our

"our Lord to the Jews) gave you circumci- DISC. XI.
"sion, not because it is of Moses, but of the
"fathers[a];" this being one of the many legal ceremonies, which were originally communicated to the ancient patriarchs, and afterwards reordained in writing by Moses. The first account of it occurs in the history of our father Abraham; and St. Paul, discoursing at large upon the point[b], informeth us, that it was given as a "sign or seal of the righteousness, which "is by faith." Now the object of Abraham's faith was redemption by the promised Seed, that is to say, by Messiah, who should spring from his loins; and in whom, by reason of that redemption, "all the nations of the earth "were to be blessed" with the blessings of eternity. And the *righteousness*, which is by such faith, consisteth in the justification of believers by the cutting off and doing away the body of sin through the sacrifice of Christ, by which they are pardoned and made holy, being separated from sin, and sin from them, in order to a final separation from every thing that offendeth, at the resurrection of the just.

[a] John vii. 22. [b] Rom. iv.

DISC. IX. This is "the righteouſneſs of faith," with which Abraham having been before inveſted, he received circumciſion, not as any thing which could make him righteous, but as a *ſign* and *ſeal* of that evangelical righteouſneſs, "which he had being yet uncircumciſed; to "the end that he might be the father of all "them who believe, though they be not cir-"cumciſed;" and that we Gentiles, as well as the Jews, might become the children, and inherit the bleſſing of Abraham. But from the inſtitution of this rite to the manifeſtation of the promiſed Seed, it became to the natural deſcendants of the patriarch Abraham, what baptiſm hath been ever ſince to the ſpiritual progeny of him, who is, in a much higher ſenſe, *the father of us all;* it became the ſacrament of initiation into the true church and faith. Now, in a ſacrament, the outward and viſible ſign is intended to introduce us to the inward and ſpiritual grace figured by it as a *ſign*, conveyed by it as a *means*, and inſured by it as a *pledge*. And what the inward and ſpiritual grace ſignified by circumciſion was, not only St. Paul, but Moſes himſelf

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self will tell us, who in the book of Deuteronomy expresseth himself in these terms; "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and "be no more stiff necked[c]." And again; "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine "heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the "Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with "all thy soul, that thou mayest live[d]." From these passages laid together, the following truths seem to be fairly deducible; namely, First, That circumcision was an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace to be wrought in the *heart:* Secondly, That this inward and spiritual grace was the cutting off and casting away of *sin:* Thirdly, That for this work they were not sufficient as of themselves, but their sufficiency was of *the Lord their God*, who would work in them, and with them, through faith, by the Holy Spirit: Fourthly, That the effect and consequence of this spiritual circumcision would be the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, with it's genuine fruit of unfeigned obedience to his commandments: And, lastly, That this would prepare the way to eternal life; "that

[c] Deut. x. 16. [d] Deut xxx. 6.

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"thou mayeſt LIVE," ſaith Moſes; "that "thou mayeſt live," not only on earth, under grace, but hereafter in glory: ſince "purifi-"cation of the heart" is in order to a better life in that celeſtial Canaan, the ultimate end of all the promiſes, that good land which the Lord our God ſhall give to every Iſraelite indeed, and in which he himſelf, after having been the "ſhield" of Abraham and his ſeed, ſhall be their "exceeding great "reward[s]." And ſo it is written, "Bleſſed "are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee "God[t]." Thus do theſe two texts from the writings of Moſes involve in them the ſubſtance of the Goſpel; they begin with the cleanſing of the heart from ſin, thence proceeding on to the love of God till they terminate in the beatific viſion of him in an endleſs life. And could the Jews have read their law, without that veil, which infidelity had drawn over the eyes of their underſtanding; could they have beheld, with open face, the glory of the Lord, enſhrined in the Moſaic myſteries; could they have diſcerned the

[s] Gen. xv. 1. [t] Matth. v. 8.

"apple

"apple of gold" through the "network of "silver[g];" instead of mistaking the casket for the jewel which it contained and preserved, they had then saved an Apostle the trouble of informing them, that "he is not a Jew, which "is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision "which is outward in the flesh; but he is a "Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision "is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in "the letter, whose praise is not of men, but "of God[h]." DISC. XI.

We will venture then to suppose, that the institution of the rite now before us, with the reason and end thereof, is sufficiently cleared, and circumcision proved to be a sacramental sign of the cutting off and casting away of sin from the heart. But what mean ye then, as saith St. Bernard, by circumcising the child Jesus, who did no sin, and knew none; who was conceived in the womb of a virgin, by the Spirit of eternal purity? why must he undergo this painful ceremony? To this we answer, besides the example of humility and obedience herein afforded us by our Lord; as

[g] Prov. xxv. 11. [h] Rom. xi. 28.

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[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

"all

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"all righteousness." This was the argument he used to John, in the case of his baptism, and it holdeth equally in that of his circumcision. For having once undertaken to appear as our surety and substitute, it became incumbent on him "to fulfil all righteousness," to perform what we should have performed, and to suffer for what we did not perform. As the children therefore were compounded of flesh and blood, he partook of the same; he was "made of a woman:" as they were circumcised, he was circumcised also; he was "made under the law[k]." And indeed, it had profited us nothing, that he was made of a woman, had he not likewise been "made "under the law;" for then the law could never have apprehended him; the law, with it's penalties, having no concern with a person, who, like him, was not an offender against it. For "the law was not made for "the righteous, but for the lawless and dis-"obedient[l]." We are the transgressors, the debtors, whose bond was forfeited, and "the "hand writing of condemnation" standing in

[k] Gal. iv. 4. [l] 1 Tim. i. 9.

full

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full force againſt us. But Chriſt, by ſubmitting to the act of circumciſion, voluntarily put himſelf under the law, and took the whole burden of it, as he did the croſs, upon his own ſhoulders: ſince it is an axiom in theology, that "if any man be circumciſed, he is "a debtor to do the whole law[m]. Chriſt therefore, by being *circumciſed*, became that *debtor*, and entered into covenant anew, as man's ſurety, to pay the uttermoſt farthing. But the debt was not a pecuniary one. The law was capital, and death the penalty incurred by the breach of it. Life was the debt due from us, and paid by Chriſt to the juſtice of heaven. And therefore, when he took upon himſelf the obligation of paying it, which was, as at this time, the covenant was made in the body of his fleſh, and ſigned with his precious blood: to ſhew that in him, now "made ſin for us," the body of ſin was to be cut off and deſtroyed; that the curſe of the law had ſeized on him as the malefactor (for ſuch he vouchſafed to be accounted, and among ſuch he did not diſdain to be number-

[m] Gal. v. 3.

ed),

ed), and that his disciples, who were really malefactors, might therefore "go their way[n]" free; the blood now shed being an earnest, that in due time he would shed the whole, and make his human nature an offering for sin. This he did upon the cross, when he paid indeed the uttermost farthing that the law itself could demand, and so fulfilled all justice; thereby "cancelling the hand writing of ordinances, taking it out of the way, and nailing it to his cross[o]," never more to appear in judgment against us. And accordingly, to our great and endless comfort, it is declared from the apostolical chair, that "there is now "no condemnation to them that are in Christ "Jesus[p]."

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The way therefore is now open for us to proceed to a consideration of the imposition of the name JESUS, at the time of circumcision. For then it was, that Christ laid himself under the obligation to SAVE, and began to answer to that sacred and glorious name. From the very moment in which a sufficient

[n] John xviii. 8. [o] Col. ii. 14. [p] Rom. v. i.

surety

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ſurety appears, and becomes reſponſible for the debt, "deliver the man," ſaith the creditor, "I have found a ranſom [q]." The greatneſs of the deliverance may be eſtimated by the value of the ranſom; and, reciprocally, the value of the ranſom by the greatneſs of the deliverance. The ranſom was the dear and only Son of God; the deliverance was a deliverance from all the terrors of angry and avenging heaven. "The law worketh wrath [r];" becauſe it condemneth the tranſgreſſors thereof, that is, without the intervention of the evangelical covenant of repentance, it condemneth every child of Adam; ſeeing that, according to the concluſion fairly deduced by the ſame Apoſtle from undeniable premiſes, "all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory "of God [s]."

But who ſhall expreſs, or conceive adequate ideas of that condemnation, from which Chriſt hath delivered us; of that wrath, which the law worketh againſt every man, who ſhall have no ſurety to appear for him, in the day

[q] Job. xxxiii. 24. [r] Rom. iv. 15. [s] Rom. iii. 23.

when

when God shall come to require an account? As far indeed as the elements of nature can display to human sense the terrible majesty of their great Creator; as far as his eternal power and Godhead can be manifested to the sons of earth by the things that are made; so far did it once please God to manifest and display them; and that, upon an occasion, which evidently pointeth out to us his intention in so doing. The occasion I mean, was the giving of the law, the circumstances of which are presumed to be the best and fullest comment upon the apostolical text before cited; "The law worketh wrath." DISC. XI.

Let imagination therefore place us for a few minutes at the foot of Sinai, where every man must place himself, who would form an estimate of the salvation wrought for him by Jesus Christ. We shall find the mountain carefully fenced about, and guarded by this awful prohibition; "Charge the people, lest they break "through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of "them perish.—For if so much as a beast touch "the mountain, he shall be stoned, or struck "through with a dart. Take heed to your-

"selves

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"selves therefore, stand at the nether part of the "mount[t]." There then let us take our station, and behold a thick cloud, blackness of darkness, settling upon the mountain, and diffusing itself around; in the midst of this most horrible night, the flame of devouring fire rolling forth in dreadful waves, and burning to the midst of heaven; lightnings every moment issuing from it, and breaking through the surrounding gloom; the air incessantly thundering from every quarter; and, above all, the voice of a trumpet piercing the heavens, sounding long, and waxing louder and louder; the mountain smoking like a furnace, and quaking greatly from it's foundations; all the people in the camp trembling and dying for fear: nay "so terrible was the "sight, that even Moses said, I exceedingly "fear and quake[u]." And if Moses, who, as the figure of him that should come, had the honour to be a mediator between an offended God and his offended people—if he exceedingly feared and quaked at this terrible sight, what must be the state of the careless sinner, who having incurred all this heavy displeasure,

[t] Exod. xix. 12, 17, 21. [u] Heb, xii. 21.

nor

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nor ever employed an hour in meditating his eſcape, ſhall be ſuddenly called upon by death to meet it all, unprepared? And who is there among us, that thinks himſelf prepared to meet his God, as he appeared upon mount Sinai? Let the experiment be made only in an ordinary tempeſt of thunder and lightning. No ſooner is that glorious voice of Jehovah heard in the heavens, but the earth trembles and is ſtill. "Hear attentively," ſaith Elihu in Job, "the noiſe of his voice, and the ſound "that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth "it under the whole heaven, and his lightning "to the ends of the earth. At this my heart "trembleth, and is moved out of his place[w]." What ſenſations then would be produced in the hearts even of the beſt of men by a manifeſtation like that at Sinai? And if the righteous ſcarcely ſuſtain it, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?

Nor let any man think himſelf unconcerned in that ſcene, becauſe it is paſt. The terrors of mount Sinai are ſtill in force againſt every one

[w] Job xxxvii. 1, 2, 3.

who

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who is not found in Chriſt Jeſus; unleſs we ſuppoſe that the deſpiſers of the Goſpel will fare better than the contemners of the Law, and not rather be thought worthy of much ſorer puniſhment. The hour is coming, when our eyes ſhall ſee more amazing ſights, and our ears ſhall hear more terrifying ſounds, than were ſeen and heard by the houſe of Iſrael in the wilderneſs. For yet a little while, and the ſame God who was revealed from heaven in flaming fire to give the law, ſhall again be revealed from heaven in flaming fire to enquire how it hath been obſerved, and to take vengeance on thoſe who have not ſecured unto themſelves a ſponſor to ſtand in the gap for them. So that although the things ſeen and heard at mount Sinai did not affect us, yet the argument enlarged upon by the Apoſtle, Heb. xii. undoubtedly doth; namely, that if the law was ſo terrible, when enacted, how much more terrible muſt it be, when required at our hands by God, coming in glorious majeſty to judge the world! Then ſhall there be blackneſs of darkneſs, not for a time, but for ever; then ſhall the lightnings of Sinai be extended over all the

the earth, and a fire be kindled which ſhall not be quenched; then ſhall the heavens paſs away with the noiſe of a great and intolerable thunder; a far louder trumpet ſhall then not only pierce the ears of the living, but alſo ſound an alarm through all the regions of the grave, and awaken thoſe who ſhall have ſlept for ages in the duſt; then he whoſe voice formerly ſhook the earth, ſhall fulfil his promiſe, "Yet once "more I ſhake not the earth only, but alſo heaven[x];" both of which ſhall be removed, and their place no more be found; then ſhall all the tribes of the earth, as well as thoſe of Iſrael, tremble, and mourn, and wail; and who, where is he, that thinketh he ſhall not then find cauſe to ſay with Moſes, "So terrible is "the ſight, that I exceedingly fear and quake!" DISC. XI.

Such therefore is the wrath which the law worketh, and ſuch is the condemnation of that "hand writing againſt us," from which our dear Maſter and Redeemer, as at this time, the time of his circumciſion, engaged to reſcue all who ſhould believe in him. Then it was, that

[x] Heb. xii. 26.

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he took upon himself the law, and the penalty annexed to the breach of it, being (as an Apostle has expressed it) "made a curse for us, to "redeem us from the curse of the law[1];" that is, to deliver us from the black darkness of sin and death; from the thunders and lightnings of the Father's vengeance; from the dread of the trumpet of eternal judgment; the dissolution and destruction of the world; the words of condemnation, and the unextinguishable flame; and having delivered us from all these terrors, to introduce us to a far different scene of things; to the light of righteousness and immortality; to the peace and love of God; to the still small voice of evangelical grace; to the harps of angels, and the music of Hallelujahs; to the final sentence of absolution, "Come, ye "blessed;" to a kingdom that cannot be moved; to the joys of heaven, and the glories of eternity. "For we are not come unto the mount that "might be touched (the palpable, material "mount), that burned with fire, nor unto black-"ness, and darkness, and tempest, and the "sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words,

[1] Gal. iii. 13.

which

"which voice they that heard, intreated that "the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any "more (for they could not endure that which "was commanded, and if ſo much as a beaſt "touch the mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned or "thruſt through with a dart: and ſo terrible "was the ſight, that even Moſes ſaid, I exceed-"ingly fear and quake.) But we are come unto "mount Sion, and unto the city of the living "God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an in-"numerable company of angels, to the gene-"ral aſſembly and church of the firſt born, which "are written in heaven, and to God the judge "of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made per-"fect, and to Jeſus the mediator of the new "covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, "which ſpeaketh better things than that of "Abel[a];" the one crying as loud for mercy, as the other did for vengeance. And therefore, when this blood of ſprinkling was firſt ſhed, "when eight days were accompliſhed for the "circumciſing the child, his name was called "JESUS, which was ſo named of the angel, "before he was conceived in the womb, ſay-

[a] Heb. xii. 18, &c.

DISC. XI. "ing, Thou ſhalt call his name JESUS, for he "ſhall SAVE his people from their ſins[a]."

The doctrine of the day being thus ſtated and explicated, nothing remains, but that we reduce it to practice. Something Chriſt hath left us, in every myſtery, to believe, and to admire; ſomething alſo to love, and to imitate. The legal ceremony of circumciſion, having received it's accompliſhment in Jeſus, became of courſe null and void; inſomuch, that the performance of it afterwards was juſtly deemed a renunciation of Chriſt, a denial of his advent in the fleſh; for ſo the Apoſtle witneſſeth; "Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be cir-"cumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing[b]." This is the unhappy caſe of the Jews, to this day; who, having loſt the evangelical faith of their fathers, ſtill continue under the law, with all it's judgments in force againſt them; and this muſt be their caſe, until their heart ſhall turn to the Lord their God, until they ſhall be led to acknowlege the holy Jeſus, as the end of the law, and the Saviour of the world. In

[a] Matth. i. 21. [b] Gal. v. 2.

the

the mean time, by us who believe, the doctrine is to be transmitted from the head to the heart, there by the operation of the eternal Spirit to do away what St. James styleth "the "superfluity of maliciousness[c]," cleansing us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God. It is true, that sin was mystically cut off, and destroyed, in the body of Christ; but wherefore? That it might live and flourish in us? God forbid. Christ was made sin for us, not that we might continue in sin, but that we might become the righteousness of God in him. For if we be dead to sin in Christ our representative, how can we, consistently with our profession, live any longer therein? How can the circumcision of Christ profit any one, who celebrates the festival as constantly as it returns, himself still continuing "uncircumcised in heart and ears?" Or, in other words, how can his baptism save him, whose life is one perpetual renunciation of it? for baptism which succeeded in the place of circumcision, takes up the mystery, where that left it. The one sheweth sin cut off, in DISC. XI.

[c] Περισσειαν κακιας——Jam. i. 21.

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and with the body of Chriſt; the other repreſenteth it as buried in his grave, and the new man, through the power of his reſurrection, riſen again, without ſin, unto ſalvation. And one cannot but admire the manner in which St. Paul hath interwoven the ſpiritual application of theſe two ſacraments of the old and new law. "Ye are complete (ſaith he to his Co-"loſſians) in Chriſt, who is the head of all prin-"cipality and power. In whom alſo ye are "circumciſed with the circumciſion made with-"out hands, by the circumciſion of Chriſt, bu-"ried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye "are riſen with him, through the faith of the "operation of God, who hath raiſed him from "the dead: and you, being dead in your ſins "and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he "quickened together with him, having for-"given you all treſpaſſes[d]." We are to labour therefore after the ſpirit and power of theſe two ſacraments in our hearts, that they may be manifeſted in our lives and converſations. Otherwiſe, the letter of them can only condemn us. For as he is not a Jew, ſo neither

[d] Col. ii. 10.

is

is he a Chriſtian, who is one outwardly; but he is a true Jew, and he is a true Chriſtian, who is ſo inwardly; from whoſe heart and members the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life are cut off; who is dead and buried to ſin, and riſen again to righteouſneſs. This bleſſed work ſacramentally ſhewn forth and begun in baptiſm, is to be continued through life by the ſucceſſive renovations of repentance, by daily acceſſions of knowlege, faith, and charity, producing and carrying on a gradual growth in grace, until it be perfected. And as the ſeaſon annually returns, when it pleaſeth God to begin again his work which men ſo often behold, of renewing the face of the earth, by commanding the ſun to reviſit and cheer our world, where nature, during his abſence, hath drooped and languiſhed away, but is again to be raiſed from the death and deformity of winter, to the life and beauty of ſpring, until, by a ſilent, progreſſive operation, the year be crowned with the loving kindneſs of the Lord; are we not hereby directed to look up by faith to the great luminary of the intellectual world, who declareth from his glorious

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throne, "Behold I make all things new[a];" beſeeching him to ariſe upon us with healing in his wings; to viſit us with the light of his countenance, and the joy of his ſalvation, that ſo old things may paſs away, and we may be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds; to diſperſe the clouds and darkneſs of ignorance; to lay the wintry ſtorms and tempeſts of diſordered paſſions, and introduce into our hearts the calm and gladſome ſpring of everlaſting righteouſneſs and peace; to pour upon the year all the bleſſings of that glorious feſtival, with which it commenceth; and, in one word, by making it HOLY, to make it HAPPY.

[a] Rev. xxi. 5.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XII.

THE EPIPHANY.

MATTHEW II. 1, 2.

Now when Jeſus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wiſe men from the eaſt to Jeruſalem, ſaying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have ſeen his ſtar in the eaſt, and are come to worſhip him.

IN this remarkable part of ſacred ſtory there are two particulars, on which, at the preſent ſeaſon, we are called upon to employ our meditations. And as they will ſuggeſt ample matter for that purpoſe, I ſhall crave your leave to enter upon a diſcuſſion of them without any farther preface.

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The particulars are theſe:

Firſt, The *perſons* here mentioned by St. Matthew.

Secondly,

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Secondly, Their *journey*.

Firſt, then, let us contemplate the *perſons* here mentioned by St. Matthew, their *country* and *condition*.

With regard to their *country*, the text gives us no farther information, than that they came from *the eaſt*. Of the ancient expoſitors, ſome mention Chaldea, others Perſia; but others, among whom are Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Epiphanius, with more probability, perhaps, aſſign Arabia Felix, a country leſs diſtant from Judea, and lying to the ſouth-eaſt of it; the ſame country pointed out by the Pſalmiſt, when, predicting the acceſſion of the Gentiles, he ſaith, "The kings of "Sheba and Seba ſhall offer gifts:" the country from whence, attended by a train of camels bearing ſpices, came the queen of Sheba to the court of the temporary and repreſentative PRINCE OF PEACE; the country particularly ſpecified in the lx^th^ chapter of Iſaiah; "All they from Sheba[a] ſhall come; they

[a] Sabea—extrema Arabiæ Felicis regio, Perſico ſinui proxima. VITRINGA in loc.

"ſhall

"shall bring gold and incense, and they shall "shew forth the praises of the Lord;" a country remarkable, by the testimony of historians, for plenty of gold, and of the most precious aromatics: a country, in the neighbourhood of which Balaam uttered and left behind him his famous prophecy, concerning the "Star "that should arise out of Jacob." DISC. XII.

As to the *condition* of these eastern travellers, it is said by the Evangelist, they were Μαγοι; a term then applied, among all the nations of the east, in it's primary and good sense, to those who gave themselves up to the pursuit of wisdom and knowlege, by all the means in their power. They were the great mathematicians, philosophers, and divines of the ages in which they lived, and had no other knowlege but that which by their own study, and the instructions of the ancients of their sect, they had attained unto. But as their credit in the world, on these accounts, was so great, that a learned man and a Magian became equivolent terms, the vulgar looking

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looking on their knowlege to be more than natural, entertained an opinion of them, as if they had been actuated and inſpired by ſupernatural powers, in the ſame manner as has too frequently happened, at other times, and in other places. In the number of theſe Magi, or learned men, of old, perſons not only of noble but of royal extraction often thought proper to enliſt themſelves. Many, therefore, have imagined theſe Magi to have been ſuch; and the ſuppoſition, all circumſtances conſidered, is not improbable.

But the particular, of which we are certain, in which we are chiefly intereſted, and which at this time claims our attention, is that they were *Gentiles*, aliens, by nature, like ourſelves, from the common-wealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe.

In the family of Noah, the true religion was univerſal or catholic. It continued to be ſo till the days of Abraham, when the general apoſtaſy of the nations to idolatry made it neceſſary that a family ſhould be called forth,

and

and ſeparated from the pollution that was in the world, to be the happy inſtruments of preſerving faith upon earth, "till the ſeed "ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was "made." By this ſtep in the divine diſpenſations, it was never intended to "put the can-"dle under a buſhel, but to place it on a "candleſtick," and there to keep it burning, that it might give light to thoſe that were in the houſe, and to thoſe who ſhould enter into it. Many, from time to time, did enter into it; and therefore many more might have entered in, had it ſo pleaſed them. The tranſactions of God with his choſen people were not carried on in a corner; and there was no period, in which he left himſelf without witneſs among the nations round about them. Let us take a curſory view of the divine proceedings, in this light only.

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Of Abraham's call the inhabitants of the country from which he was called, and, in conſequence of that call, departed for ever, could not have been ignorant; and as many as were diſpoſed to obey the admonition of Heaven,

DISC. XII. Heaven, might, doubtleſs, have had permiſſion to attend him.

The patriarchal familes, in their ſojournings, travelled through many of the countries inhabited in thoſe early ages. By the governors of thoſe countries we find them treated with reverence, and acknowleged to be prophets, nay, "mighty princes of God." The ſtory of their divine call and deſtination muſt have been the ſubject of converſation wherever they came, nor would they be backward to make it ſo. They would, of courſe, communicate to others what Heaven had communicated to them. They would exhort men, as they went, to ſave themſelves from that untoward generation. That ſuch converſations and ſuch exhortations were not without fruit, we may conclude from the mention that is made of "the ſouls which they had gotten "in Haran," or the perſons they had converted, and adopted into the holy family. The behaviour of Abimelech and his ſubjects is very obſervable, and ſhews there was, even among *them*, a ſenſe and fear of God, which,

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it is to be apprehended, we might now look for in vain in countries calling themſelves *Chriſtian.* DISC XII.

The deliverance of Abraham's brother Lot, and the unparalleled overthrow of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven, muſt have been a very awakening and affecting call to all within hearing.

In proceſs of time, we find Egypt, then the moſt powerful and learned of nations, opening it's hoſpitable arms to receive the family of Jacob, having owed it's preſervation, in the days of dearth, to one of that family, ordained, in a wonderful manner, to ſave much people alive. Here the church was ſettled, increaſed and flouriſhed for more than three hundred years, bearing teſtimony to the true religion, in the eye of the world.

Let any one conſider with himſelf the aſtoniſhing ſeries of miracles wrought by Moſes on a ſtage ſo public as this;—the paſſage through the Red Sea; the deſtruction of Pharaoh

DISC. XII. Pharaoh and his hoſt; the march of the Iſraelitiſh army, with the divine Shechinah, or Glory, in the midſt of it; the awful and tremendous appearance on mount Sinai, at the promulgation of the law; their entrance into Canaan; the paſſage of Jordan; the fall of Jericho; the exciſion of the devoted nations—could all theſe things be done, and the rumour of them not be ſpread, in thoſe days, among the nations, both thoſe that were near, and thoſe that were afar off?

The fame of this diſtinguiſhed and extraordinary people muſt have increaſed with their conqueſts, till univerſal peace was eſtabliſhed in the days of Solomon. To his court the princes of the earth reſorted; ſtruck with his glory, charmed with his wiſdom, and deſirous of being inſtructed by him. Would you know the exalted ſentiments entertained by them of him, and of the people over whom he preſided? Liſten to the queen of Sheba ſpeaking for them all. "It was a true report "that I heard, in mine own land, of thine "acts, and of thy wiſdom. Howbeit, I be-

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"lieved not the words until I came, and mine "eyes had ſeen it: and behold, the half was "not told me; thy wiſdom and proſperity "exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy "are thy men, happy are theſe thy ſervants, "which ſtand continually before thee, and "that hear thy wiſdom. Bleſſed be the Lord "thy God, which delighted in thee, to ſet "thee on the throne of Iſrael; becauſe the "Lord loved Iſrael for ever, therefore made "he thee king, to do judgment and juſ-"tice [b]." DISC. XII.

The miſſion of the prophet Jonah to preach repentance to the inhabitants of the great

"[b] In Solomon's time there were 153600 proſelytes in "the land of Iſrael. 2 Chron. ii. 17." See FLEURY's *History of the Israelites*, Part II. chap. ix. p. 84. This little book contains a conciſe, pleaſing, and juſt account of the *manners*, *customs*, *laws*, *polity*, and *religion* of the Iſraelites. It is an excellent introduction to the reading of the Old Teſtament, and ſhould be put into the hands of every young perſon. An elegant Engliſh verſion of it, by Mr. FARNEWORTH, dedicated to the preſent Archbiſhop of CANTERBURY, was printed in 1756, for WHISTON, WHITE, and BALDWIN.

DISC. XII.

city Nineveh, the capital of the Aſſyrian empire, is an event which deſerves a place in your conſiderations on the ſubject before us.

When the Babylonian power was at it's height under Nebuchadnezzar, the people of God, for their tranſgreſſions, were carried into captivity by him. Reflect upon the very remarkable incidents to which that captivity gave birth; the interpretation of the monarch's dreams; the accompliſhment of one of them, by his degradation, and ſubſequent reſtoration; the preſervation of the three children in the furnace, and of Daniel in the den of lions; with the decrees, in favour of true religion, promulgated through the whole extent of that enormous empire, to which moſt of the kingdoms of the known world were at that time ſubject.

Upon the ruins of the Babylonian empire aroſe that of the Medes and Perſians; the celebrated founder of which began his reign with the publication of a decree, for the return

turn of God's chosen people to their own land, with leave to rebuild their city and temple. DISC. XII.

The prosperity and felicity of Israel after their return from Babylon; the interview between the High Priest and Alexander, when upon his march to the conquest of Persia, as it stands recorded by Josephus; the well known exploits of the Maccabees against Antiochus; the connection formed, about that period, between the Jews and the Romans; the translation of the Scriptures into Greek, and the universal expectation produced thereby among the nations, of a ruler that should come out of Judea—all these considerations, though perhaps they are suffered, in the course of our reading, to glide by us unobserved, as they occur separately, and unconnected with each other, yet when they are thrown together, and duly weighed, may serve greatly to assist us in forming our judgment concerning the state of the Gentiles, and the testimony from time to time borne to the true religion, by the then church of

DISC. XII. God, in the heathen world[c]. Notwithſtanding the light heaven has been pleaſed to manifeſt, whether in former or in latter times, many, both individuals and nations, have ſtill continued to ſit in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death. The fate of ſuch it is not our buſineſs to determine. One thing we know, and more we cannot, more we need not know; that in the laſt great day, when that point and all others ſhall be finally ſettled, He is to ſettle them, who, before men and angels, "will be juſtified in his ſaying, and clear "when he is judged." What mercy can do, mercy will do. All iniquity ſhall then ſtop her mouth, and no perſon that ſhall be condemned, will have power or reaſon to complain. To the curioſity, which, negligent of it's own intereſt in Chriſt, is ever anxiouſly enquiring into the future deſtination of thoſe who never heard of him, the proper anſwer,

[c] The reader will find many curious and valuable obſervations upon this important and intereſting ſubject, in the Biſhop of CARLISLE's *Theory of Religion*, Part the II[d]; as alſo, in a diſſertation of Dr. WATERLAND, ſubjoined to *Scripture vindicated*. See alſo LELAND's *Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation*, Part I. ch. xxix.

ſurely

ſurely, is—"What is that to thee? Follow "thou me." DISC. XII.

That the Jew, with the Scriptures in his hands, ſhould be blind to the counſels of God reſpecting the Gentiles and their return to the church, is indeed truly marvellous. It was foretold, that the poſterity of Japheth ſhould one day "dwell in the tents of Shem[d];" that in the promiſed ſeed of Abraham "all "the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed[e];" that to Shiloh ſhould "the gathering of the "nations be[f]." Iſaiah is very expreſs, and ſaith, "There ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, which "ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people; to "it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, and his reſt ſhall "be glorious[g].—It is a light thing that thou "ſhouldeſt be my ſervant, to raiſe up the "tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved "of Iſrael; I will alſo give thee for a light "to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my "ſalvation to the ends of the earth[h].—Ariſe,

[d] Gen. ix. 27. [e] Gen. xii. 3.
[f] Gen. xlix. 10. [g] Iſai. xi. 10.
[h] Iſai. xlix. 6.

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" ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory " of the Lord is riſen upon thee. For behold, " darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, and groſs " darkneſs the people; but the Lord ſhall " ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen " upon thee. And the Gentiles ſhall come " to thy light, and kings to the brightneſs of " thy riſing. Lift up thine eyes round about, " and ſee; all they gather themſelves toge- " ther, they come to thee; thy ſons ſhall come " from far, and thy daughters ſhall be nurſed " at thy ſide. Then thou ſhalt ſee, and flow " together, and thine heart ſhall fear, and be " enlarged; becauſe the abundance of the " ſea ſhall be converted unto thee, the forces " of the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee [i]." No leſs clear are ſeveral paſſages in the Pſalms, which never failed to make a part of the ſynagogue ſervice. " All the ends of the " world ſhall remember, and turn unto the " Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations " ſhall worſhip before him [k].—The princes of " the nations ſhall be joined to the people of " the God of Abraham [l].—Praiſe the Lord all

[i] Iſai. lx. 1, &c. [k] Pſal. xxii. 27. [l] Pſ. xlvii. 9.

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" ye heathen, praiſe him all ye nations; for " his merciful kindneſs is ever more and more " towards us, and the truth of the Lord en- " dureth for ever [m]."

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The event, which bore ſo capital a ſhare in the gracious deſigns of the Almighty, which was thus predicted, and celebrated beforehand, by patriarchs and prophets, began, as at this ſeaſon, to take place, by the coming of the eaſtern ſages to Bethlehem, in the name of us all, as repreſentatives of the heathen world. They were the firſt-fruits of that glorious harveſt, afterwards reaped and gathered by the Apoſtles and their ſucceſſors; they were the ſtandard-bearers of that noble army, which, from the four quarters of the globe, hath ſince marched into the church, through the gates mercifully thrown open to admit them. From the conſideration of the *perſons* mentioned in the text, we proceed therefore to conſider,

[m] Pſ. cxvii.

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Secondly, their *journey*; the *occaſion*, and the *end* of it; "They came to Jeruſalem, "ſaying, Where is he that is born king of "the Jews? For we have ſeen his ſtar in the "eaſt, and are come to worſhip him."

The birth of Chriſt was firſt revealed to the ſhepherds, who were Jews. For that purpoſe, the angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, and the *glory* of the Lord ſhone round about them; a proper intimation of *his* appearance, at the brightneſs of whoſe riſing on the intellectual world, darkneſs was to vaniſh, and the ſhadows fly away. A ſign of the ſame import was vouchſafed to the Gentiles, as their conductor to the new born Redeemer of mankind. "A *ſtar*, which they ſaw in the "eaſt, went before them, till it came, and "ſtood over where the young child was."

I ſhall not take up your time in propoſing conjectures on the nature and form of this ſtar. It was undoubtedly ſuch, as might beſt anſwer the end in view; and probably far exceeded

ceeded the other ſtars, to appearance, in magnitude and brightneſs; as it notified the birth of one, who was fairer than the children of men, on whom reſted the ſpirit of grace and glory. DISC. XII.

How juſt and how beautiful an emblem was ſuch a ſtar of the bleſſed perſon to whom it pointed! Celeſtial in it's original; framed of the pureſt materials; admitting no droſs and baſeneſs into it's compoſition; without ſpot, or the ſhadow of a cloud; ſhedding a luſtre incapable of being ſullied by the objects on which it fell, and paſſing through all things undefiled; moving above the world, though moving in it; placed in heaven, to give light upon the earth; riſing in the eaſt, but diffuſing it's glories to the weſt; the firſt-fruits of the day, the bright and the morning ſtar, diſpelling the ſhades, clearing the ſkies, eclipſing the other luminaries, reigning alone and unrivalled in the firmament; from thence not more bright than beneficial, exerting an influence, powerful, though ſilent and ſecret; directing

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recting and attracting men to the ſalvation it portended[a]!

The eaſtern Magi, as is evident from the text, underſtood, before they began their journey, that the ſtar which they ſaw did by it's appearance indicate the birth of the "King "of the Jews," that is, of the perſon foretold and expected, under that character, among the people of God. They underſtood, that this perſon, though ſtyled "King of the *Jews*," would accept the oblations of the *Gentiles*, and extend to them the bleſſings of his reign. They underſtood, as it ſhould ſeem, that he was more than man; "We have ſeen *his* ſtar "in the eaſt, and are come to *worſhip* him." By what means is it likely they ſhould have attained this knowlege?

It is certain, that at the period when theſe things happened, and for ſome time preceding

[a] See theſe particulars beautifully expanded and enlarged upon, by the admirable Dr. SOUTH, in a diſcourſe upon Rev. xxii. 16. "I am the root and the offspring of "David, and the bright and morning ſtar." Vol. III. Serm. VII.

it,

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it, a general expectation of a ruler to ariſe in Judea prevailed all over the world. Suetonius, not to mention other hiſtorians, expreſsly tells us, that an antient and uninterrupted opinion had prevailed *in all the eaſt*, that at that time (namely, at the beginning of the laſt Jewiſh war) it was decreed by the fates, that ſome coming out of Judea ſhould obtain the ſovereignty. And no wonder, as a learned writer well obſerves, that ſuch an opinion ſhould be propagated throughout the eaſt, when we conſider the vaſt number of Jews, which were ſpread over all the eaſtern countries. In the reign of Ahaſuerus, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, the Jews were diſperſed throughout all the provinces of the Perſian monarchy, and that, in numbers ſufficient to defend themſelves againſt their enemies in thoſe provinces; and many of the people of the land alſo, as we read in the book of Eſther, became Jews. After the Babyloniſh captivity, the Jews increaſed ſo mightily, that we find them not only throughout Aſia, but in Africa, and in many cities and iſlands of Europe, mentioned in the ſecond chapter of the Acts. Wherever they

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they dwelt, they made many proſelytes to their religion; and, in their attempts to this purpoſe, they muſt very much ſpread the expectation of the Meſſiah's coming; an article ſo important in itſelf, and ſo flattering to their national vanity. Theſe opportunities of being informed of the approaching Advent of the great King, the Magians of the eaſt enjoyed in common with many other people. To which it may be added, that Zoroaſter, the famous reformer of the Magian ſect, is generally ſaid to have been by extraction a Jew, and to have lived as a ſervant with one of the prophets, probably Daniel: he was well acquainted with the writings of Moſes, and has inſerted in his book many particulars from them.

Now, if we ſuppoſe the minds of men, of learned men more eſpecially, to have been in this manner prepared, and rendered attentive to what happened, the ſudden appearance of a new ſtar in the heavens, ſuper-eminent in ſplendor, and pointing towards Judea, might, perhaps, even without any farther information,

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be conſtrued by them as a ſign, that the long looked for Prince and Saviour was actually born. DISC. XII.

If we farther ſuppoſe, that the famous prediction, delivered in the mountains of the eaſt, by Balaam, a prophet of their own, who, having his eyes opened, ſaw and mentioned, ſo many ages before it's appearance, "the "STAR that ſhould ariſe out of Jacob, the "ſceptre that ſhould come out of Iſrael*;" if we ſuppoſe, I ſay, that this famous prediction was carefully preſerved, and handed down from one generation to another, as would moſt probably be the caſe, it doubtleſs might have lent it's aſſiſtance at this time, and upon this occaſion.

But after all, when we conſider, that every circumſtance relative to the birth of Chriſt was, and muſt needs be, extraordinary and ſupernatural, full of wonder, and full of myſtery; when we reflect on the journey and oblations of theſe ſages, thus repreſenting, as

* Numbers xxiv. 17.

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it were, the whole heathen world, now at length returning to the acknowlegement and adoration of it's Redeemer, who ſhould have been all along an object of faith to the nations, as well as to the Jews; why ſhould we not conclude, that as an angel accompanied the glory that ſhone round the Jewiſh ſhepherds, and proclaimed to them the nativity of Jeſus; ſo ſome beneficent ſpirit was enjoined to communicate to theſe Gentile philoſophers the ſame gracious and comfortable intelligence. This, however, we may moſt aſſuredly conclude, that he who hung out the ſtar in the firmament, viſible to their outward eyes, took care that it ſhould not be hung out in vain; but that ſome attendant light ſhould at the ſame time ſhine inward, and irradiate their minds with the knowlege of it's ſignification and import.

The fact is clear. They ſaw, they underſtood, they ſet out. No diſtance, no difficulties, no dangers, were ſufficient to deter them. They paſſed the rocks and ſands of the deſerts, "the tents of Kedar," and "the hills of the "robbers."

"robbers." Children of the faith of Abraham, they left their own country, obeying the heavenly call. Led by the ſtar, as the Iſraelites of old by the pillar of fire, they purſued their way through the wilderneſs to the land of Promiſe, there to ſeek him, "in whom all the "promiſes of God," made to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, "were yea and amen."

Arrived at Jeruſalem, they imparted the glad tidings to thoſe from whom they ſhould have received them. Neither afraid of Herod, nor aſhamed of Meſſiah, they profeſſed openly the occaſion of their journey. They believed, and therefore they ſpake. "Where "is he that is born king of the Jews?" To you, O ye rulers and teachers in Iſrael, we apply ourſelves. You muſt know the birth-place of the Redeemer. Saw ye him whom we ſeek? Tell us where we may find, and adore him.

Far other ſentiments were excited, by this queſtion, in the breaſt of Herod. Human policy would not ſuffer him to hear of a king, without

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without thinking of a rival; and therefore he immediately projected a plan for the deſtruction of the new-born prince.

For this end, he ſummoned a council of the chief prieſts and elders, and demanded of them, where Chriſt ſhould be born? Their lips were intended to preſerve knowlege; and they did ſo. They anſwered, In Bethlehem of Judea; and cited their authority from the prophet Micah. They gave true information, and directed others aright, though they went not themſelves. Herod enquired concerning Chriſt, as many do concerning his religion, in order not to revere and obey, but to oppoſe and deſtroy.

The Magi, having now obtained the deſired information, proceeded to Bethlehem; and, leſt their ardour ſhould be damped by any doubt, lo, the ſtar which they ſaw in the eaſt, and which, therefore, had diſappeared for a time, again "went before them, till it came "and ſtood over where the young child was." The ſight of their original and faithful moni-

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ter cheered their ſpirits, diſpelling every anxious and uneaſy thought. "When they "ſaw the ſtar, they rejoiced with exceeding "great joy." DISC. XII.

When their guide had conducted them to their journey's end, we read not that they were at all offended, or diſconcerted, at the humble and lowly ſtate in which they found the heaven-proclaimed king. The queen of Sheba came from far to hear the wiſdom, and ſee the glory of Solomon. She accordingly heard his wiſdom, and ſaw his glory; both beyond even her high-raiſeſt expectation. Theſe men came from far to behold the King of the Jews. But in his appearance there was neither beauty, nor glory, that they ſhould deſire, or admire him. They ſaw, they heard nothing, but ſigns of poverty and weakneſs. Great, ſurely, was their faith; and greater, one is tempted to think, muſt have been their knowlege of the divine diſpenſations, than we are aware of. Where the ſtar reſted, there was the perſon whom they had been directed to ſeek. They therefore entered, and adored;

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and the Gentiles acknowleged him, whom the Jews diſowned and rejected. They offered to him the richeſt productions of the country from whence they came; ſuch things as were moſt precious, and of higheſt uſe and ſignification in ornamenting and exalting the ſervices of the temple and altar. "All they (ſays Iſaiah) "from Sheba ſhall come; they ſhall bring gold "and incenſe, and," by ſo doing, "they ſhall "ſhew forth the praiſes of the Lord[p]," while they thus devote themſelves and their ſubſtance to his ſervice. And ſince the eaſtern Magi, as hath been before obſerved, are upon this occaſion to be conſidered by us as the delegates and deputies of the heathen world, the hiſtory of their journey and their oblations ſpeaks the ſame language with that employed by St. John in the Revelation, concerning the Chriſtian church. "And the nations of them that are ſaved ſhall walk in the light of it; and "the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all; and "the kings of the earth do bring their glory "and honour into it[q]."

[p] Iſa. lx. 6. [q] Rev. xxi. 24.

Some

Some reflections on the ſubject naturally offer themſelves, in the way of *application*. DISC. XII.

And firſt, Let us evermore, on this returning feſtival, give thanks unto our Lord God, for the revelation of that great myſtery of mercy, the reſtoration of the Gentiles to the church, from which they had been, for ſo many ages, excluded; rather ſhould we ſay, they had excluded themſelves. The unhappy prodigal voluntarily left his father's houſe, the door of which was ſtill open, whenever he ſhould be diſpoſed to return and re-enter. But the time was long, ere he came to himſelf, and thought of being again received into the family of the faithful. No ſooner was that the caſe, than the father, as if he had all along been looking out, in hope and expectation of his child, ſaw him while he was yet a great way off, ran to meet him, embraced him with a parent's tenderneſs, brought him into his houſe, made a feaſt for him, and commanded that no voice ſhould be heard but that of joy and gladneſs, becauſe he that had been loſt was now found; he that had been dead was

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alive again!—"O ſing unto the Lord a new "ſong; ſing unto the Lord, all the earth. "Sing unto the Lord, bleſs his name: ſhew "forth his ſalvation from day to day. Declare "his glory among the heathen, his wonders "among all people. For the Lord is great, "and greatly to be praiſed; he is to be feared "above all gods. For all the gods of the na- "tions are idols: but the Lord made the "heavens. Honour and majeſty are before him: "ſtrength and beauty are in his ſanctuary[1]!"

Secondly, it may be remarked, that the perſons who came at this time to Bethlehem, were the learned of their country, men particularly addicted to the ſciences of philoſophy and aſtronomy. They contemplated the heavens, and at length were favoured with the ſight of a ſtar, which led them to him who made the heavens, and who was then deſcended from on high, to perform a work ſtill more wonderful. Man was formed with an underſtanding, for the attainment of knowlege; and happy is he, who is employed in the purſuit of it. Ignorance is in it's nature

[1] Pſ. xcvi. 1, &c.

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unprofitable; but every kind of knowlege may be turned to uſe. Diligence is generally rewarded with the diſcovery of that which it ſeeks after; ſometimes, of that which is much more valuable. Human learning, with the bleſſing of God upon it, introduces us to divine wiſdom; and while we ſtudy the works of nature, the God of nature will manifeſt himſelf to us; ſince, to a well tutored mind, "The heavens," without a miracle "declare "his glory, and the firmament ſheweth his "handy work." DISC. XII.

Thirdly, From the example of the Magi, let us learn to be very watchful and obſervant of thoſe lights, which at ſundry times and in divers manners are vouchſafed to us. At the laſt day, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed, and the circumſtances of our lives ſhall paſs in review, it will then be ſeen, that God did not "leave himſelf without witneſs." It will appear, that the ſinner had many calls, both from within, and from without, to which he might have hearkened; and to which if he had hearkened, they had been the means of correcting,

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recting, inſtructing, and ſaving him. Above all things, how attentive ſhould we be to the Scriptures, wherein are contained the words that muſt finally decide the fate of thoſe who have them in their hands, and are capable of peruſing them? In them ſhines, with pure and ever increaſing luſtre, the ſure word of prophecy, pointing always from the beginning to the Saviour of mankind, and at laſt marking out the very place of his birth; like the ſtar in the eaſt, moving onward in it's ſphere, "till it came "and ſtood over where the young child was." If we are not led by the one to ſeek after the Redeemer, ſurely they who ſet out for Judea, upon the evidence of the other, muſt riſe up in the judgment againſt us, and condemn us.

Laſtly, when we reflect upon the difficulties and dangers that lay in the way of theſe eaſtern ſages, and the unremitting perſeverance which vanquiſhed them all, we ſhall bluſh at the remembrance of thoſe trifling obſtructions in our Chriſtian courſe, which we have ſo often been tempted to deem inſuperable. Our faith, once fixed on the baſis of it's proper evidence, ſhould never be ſhaken by the cavils of ſceptical and licentious

licentious men. For when there is great strength of argument set before us, if we refuse to do what appears most fit to be done, till every little objection is removed that metaphysical refinement can invent, we shall never take one wise resolution, as long as we live. Let faith, therefore, have it's perfect work; let it go on, conquering, and to conquer, till we have thereby completely overcome the world. Though Herod should be moved, and all Jerusalem with him, let us follow our heavenly conductor, and, rejoicing with exceeding great joy, proceed directly to Bethlehem. There, through meanness, poverty, and obscurity, let us discern the king of the Jews, give him the honour due unto his name, acknowlege and adore him, as our Lord, and our God. And since we are commanded not to appear before the Lord empty, let us bring presents, when we come into his courts. Let us offer to him of our substance, and the first fruits of our increase; let us offer to him of the true riches, with which he has blessed us; faith, tried, precious, resplendent, as *gold;* devotion, ascending from fervent affections, like the smoke of *frankincense* from the holy altar; love, peace, joy, and the

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the other graces of ſanctification, fragrant, cheering, and diffuſive, like "*myrrh*, and aloes, "with all the chief ſpices, and powders of the "merchant." Let us offer to him our ſtrength, our time, and our talents, our ſouls and bodies, all we have, and all we are, to worſhip and obey him this day, and every day which it ſhall pleaſe him to add to our lives. With theſe diſpoſitions and reſolutions if we now come to his light, and haſte to the brightneſs of his riſing, we ſhall hereafter behold him in his meridan exaltation, when heaven and earth ſhall be full of the majeſty of his glory; when, the laſt enemy being deſtroyed, he ſhall appear, as the "Prince of Peace," in a city that hath foundations; when all kings ſhall fall down before him, all nations ſhall ſerve him; when he ſhall reign for ever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords; when he ſhall receive as his juſt and rightful tribute (the only tribute which can then be paid) the praiſes of his redeemed ſubjects, and the everlaſting Hallelujahs of the celeſtial choir, aſcribing, as we now do, to him, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, all bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, might, majeſty, and dominion, for ever and ever. And let all the people ſay, AMEN.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

MUSEUM BRITANNICUM